

AMAZONS AND ARTISTS: A STUDY OF ECUADORIAN
WOMEN'S PROSE

By

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Because of all their love and the many sacrifices they have made for me during the years, I dedicate this dissertation to my mother and father.

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Despite current efforts to analyze the role of women in Latin America, only minimal information is available about Ecuadorian women. Excluding traditional references to such vaunted national heroines as Manuela Sáenz, Manuela Cañizares, and Mariana de Jesús, little is known about the principal concerns and aspirations of Ecuador's women. Similarly, because literary critics rarely have offered more than a cursory mention of the works published by Ecuadorian women, there is a dearth of information on the extent to which female writers have participated in national letters. The purpose of this dissertation, therefore, is to fill these voids by analyzing the essays and fiction Ecuadorian women have published to date. More specifically, attention is given to what women have said about their role in society, about male-female relationships in Ecuador, and about their chief aims, problems, and fears. In short, this study is primarily concerned with two major goals: (1) to refute traditional claims that women have not

written prose literature in Ecuador; and (2) to demonstrate that the major themes found in their works offer a penetrating view of the female's place in Ecuadorian society.

Regarding the first objective, after considering the authors and works analyzed, it is apparent critics have neglected many women writers who have turned to literature as a means of expressing themselves. Their numbers might be larger were it not for the fact that they have been "victimized," so to speak, by a body of literary criticism that overlooks their work and denies them artistic status. The few writers who have overcome this prejudice and have ultimately been recognized in anthologies and literary histories (i.e., Dolores Veintemilla de Galindo, Marietta de Veintemilla, and Blanca Martínez de Tinajero) have nevertheless been treated as secondary figures whose works are assumed to be of scant importance or undeserving of serious critical attention. Thus, in our study we have shouldered the burden of reexamining women's place in national letters, with the express purpose of demonstrating that a meritorious literary tradition exists among Ecuador's women writers. Some major figures examined are Zoila Ugarte, Rosa Borja, Hipatia Cárdenas, Eugenia Viteri, Lupe Rumazo, and Alicia Yáñez Cossío.

The treatment of female images in Ecuadorian women's prose demonstrates that women have not been totally satisfied with their secondary role in national development. Contrary to Benajmín Carrión's belief that Ecuador is a "pueblo hijo de mujer" (i.e., a country which has depended heavily on its women throughout the course of national history), women's literary works point out that the female has had to fight continually against male domination--political, cultural, and sexual. Thus, Ecuador's women frequently have used prose literature

to champion feminist issues, reject inequities, injustices and sources of repression.

The writers' comments about women in Ecuador presented in this study only reflect the viewpoint of the urban middle-class female intellectual. Up to the present, Indian women, the *montuvias* (rural women from the coast), and marginal women from the city have yet to describe their own situation. Similarly lacking are studies on women journalists and poetesses; the image of women in male writers' works; a reevaluation of women's participation in history; sexual attitudes among women; and women in the labor force. In short, because much work remains to be done in terms of investigating the attitudes and problems of the Ecuadorian female, it is hoped that this dissertation will underscore the voids in our knowledge and stimulate the continued redressing of traditional prejudices about Ecuadorian women through studies on their numerous and diverse contributions to society.

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INTRODUCTION

In spite of current efforts to interpret and understand clearly the role of women in Latin America, researchers have offered minimal information about Ecuadorian women. Consequently, the purpose of this dissertation is to fill this void, to study the Ecuadorian woman's role in society by means of a detailed analysis of the prose works (essay and fiction) that Ecuadorian women writers have published to date. Attention will be given to what the women have said about their own role in society, about male-female relationships in Ecuador, and about their chief concerns, aspirations, and fears. In short, the following study of Ecuador's women writers will achieve two goals: (1) establish the extent of women's contribution to Ecuadorian letters; and (2) illustrate women's position in Ecuadorian society.

With respect to the first objective, because few critics have been aware of the existence of female writers in Ecuador, critical attention devoted to women's literary production has been rare. Even such leading scholars of national letters as Benjamín Carrión, Isaac Barrera, Angel Rojas, and Edmundo Ribadeneira have done little more than acknowledge some names and titles in their general comments about Ecuadorian literature.¹ Furthermore, although critics occasionally have alluded to women's limited participation in national letters when explaining the absence of research on female writers, at no time has anyone attempted to analyze the complex reasons which account for this scarcity. In effect, due to the overall lack of interest in investigating

women's place in literature, current knowledge about the female writers has been based on a series of suppositions which people through the years have considered conclusive.²

While it would be incorrect to suggest that women have been prolific writers in Ecuador, this dissertation will demonstrate that they have written more prose than is generally assumed. Indeed female literary production goes far beyond the critics' traditional, limited references to Marietta de Veintemilla (1858-1907) and Blanca Martínez de Tinajero (1897).

Regarding Ecuadorian women and their place in society, the female writers frequently have used prose literature as a platform for their major concerns and problems, offering the reader a clear idea of many of the realities that characterize women's lives in Ecuador. In short, the importance of literature when studying certain aspects of a society becomes evident upon reading Erich Koehler's assertion that "es posible partiendo de la literatura explicar una sociedad, es decir, conocer su espíritu y los hechos que constituyen su carácter fundamental; una de las funciones de la literatura en la historia del espíritu es el explicar la sociedad de su época."³ Hence, a clear understanding of Ecuadorian women writers and their prose is essential when attempting to ascertain women's role in society. John Stuart Mill has noted that "we may safely assert that the knowledge which men can acquire of women, even as they have been and are, without reference to what they might be, is wretchedly imperfect and superficial, and always will be so, until women themselves have told all that they have to tell."⁴

In general, the dissertation will be developed in the following manner: Chapter I will discuss the paradox of Ecuadorian women's dynamic

participation in the country's history and their lackluster role in literature; Chapter II will present briefly the major pre-twentieth century women writers, paying particular attention to Marietta de Veintemilla; Chapter III will study the importance of Ecuador's feminist journals; Chapter IV will treat the essayists; and Chapter V (novelists) and Chapter VI (short story writers), the prose fiction writers.

It should be added that this dissertation does not claim to include all names of women who have written prose in Ecuador, nor all the works published by the writers. A great deal of material has been lost and/or misplaced because of limited circulation between provinces and traditional difficulties in publishing, two major problems which make impossible a complete study at the present time. Nevertheless, the analysis and bibliography which follow are extensive enough to introduce future researchers to the most important prose material readily available in Ecuador, and moreover, to open the way to future studies on female writers, in general, and Ecuadorian women, in particular.

Notes
Introduction

¹See: Benjamín Carrión, *El nuevo relato ecuatoriano: Crítica y antología*, 2nd ed. (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958); Isaac Barrera, *Historia de la literatura ecuatoriana* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1960); Angel Rojas, *La novela ecuatoriana*, Biblioteca de Autores Ecuatorianos, No. 29 (Guayaquil: Clásicos Ariel, n.d.); Edmundo Ribadeneira, *La moderna novela ecuatoriana* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1958).

²Critical perspectives on Ecuadorian women writers also are limited because the last important study on Ecuadorian literature was published in 1960 (Barrera's literary history). Women writers have been quite active during the contemporary period; nevertheless, their latest production has not been analyzed outside of several book reviews and prologues.

³Erich Koehler, "Las posibilidades de una interpretación sociológica ilustradas a través del análisis de textos literarios franceses de distintas épocas," in *Literatura y sociedad: Problemas de metodología en sociología de la literatura*, ed. Roland Barthes, Henri Lefebvre, and Lucien Goldmann, trans. R. de la Iglesia, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: Ediciones Martínez Roca, S. A., 1971), p. 72.

⁴John Stuart Mill, "The Subjection of Women," in *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings*, ed. Miriam Schneir (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), pp. 172-173.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL HEROINES AND PROSE WRITERS: A CONTRAST IN FEMALE IMAGES IN ECUADOR

Although very little research has been done on Ecuadorian women's social, economical, and political situation, numerous scholars have studied women from an historical point of view, frequently glorifying female participation in national history. Manuela Sáenz, the "Libertadora del Libertador," for example, is often cited to illustrate the active role women presumably played during the Independence period. Unfortunately, these historical references to Ecuadorian women usually create an idealized female stereotype that "obscures the actual social condition of women and induces them to seek consolation in myths rather than work for social change."¹ Indeed while many writers seem to hold Ecuadorian women in high regard, their comments and conclusions about women's place in history rarely give insight into the major problems and concerns females have struggled with during the years.

Curiously enough, however, whereas the gallery of Ecuadorian heroines seems to suggest women have enjoyed considerable prestige and status in society, the often-neglected group of female writers intimates that, for the most part, Ecuadorian women have been victims of long-standing prejudices and taboos. Consequently, before analyzing the major themes found in the female writers' prose works, this chapter will contrast the optimistic view common to the principal concepts and ideas published about Ecuadorian women, in general, with the pessimistic

image that arises when considering the problems and injustices suffered by the writers. As will be noted, the chasm that exists between these two diverse female models is closely related to the sharp contradictions Virginia Woolf referred to when comparing women in literature with women in daily life: "Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband."²

Turning specifically to Ecuadorian women and history, Benjamín Carrión, Ecuador's foremost twentieth century essayist and literary critic, a man whose opinion is always taken seriously in Ecuadorian circles, maintains that women have been his nation's principal heroes. In fact, Carrión has written categorically that Ecuador's main contributions to history have been made by its heroines, and therefore, has described the country as a "pueblo hijo de mujer."³ According to his interpretation, Ecuador's first important women were the Amazons, the female warriors who fascinated western man's imagination almost from the time Columbus discovered the New World. They, along with the wondrous flora and fauna, the abundance of precious metals, and the mysterious primitive peoples, were part of the long-desired Utopia which Alfonso Reyes later called *La última Tule*.

Significantly, in the midst of the explorers' marvelous, magical and unreal accounts of America, some of the earliest references to Ecuador were primarily concerned with the Amazon women. In this respect, Carrión claims: "Esas, las Amazonas de Orellana--el hombre que desde Quito marchó, guiado por la fábula también, en busca del río mar--. Esas son las genitrices de la patria. Ellas el comienzo de nuestra

leyenda de pueblo con raíz en la tierra."⁴ Hence, for purposes of national history, the Amazons--Ecuadorian women who used men for their own sexual pleasure, free women who controlled their own world--are important for two reasons: (1) they are basic to Ecuadorian legend and folklore; and (2) they constitute one of Ecuador's first contributions to Latin American historiography. Glorifying his supposed ancestors, Carrión writes:

No. Nosotros no tenemos un don Roldán, un Cid Campeador, un Parsifal: tenemos unas mujeres *machazas*, muy hembras, muy mujeres en lo de grandes amadoras y multiparidoras. Estas mujeres guerreros, [sic] las amazonas, han sido combatidas por aquellos que, a título de historiadores, hubieran querido que en los archivos helenos quedara un *documento* legalizado sobre la existencia de la Esfinge y la Leyenda de Edipo; o en los archivos germanos se encontrara una documentación *fehaciente* sobre el *Anillo de los Nibelungos*; . . . y sobre todo, que en los archivos hispánicos existiera en legajos bien encuadernados los documentos relacionados con la Leyenda y Poemas del Cid y las sinvergüencerías de los Condes de Carrión.⁵

In similar fashion, because she married Huayna-Capac and gave birth to Atahualpa, Paccha is claimed to be an early national heroine who was instrumental in determining the major events that occurred before and during the Conquest. According to historians, Huayna-Capac could not control the region north of Quito until he married the Shyri princess who, in turn, convinced her followers to accept the Inca's supreme authority. Carrión exclaims: "Entonces, Paccha, la quiteña, es la creadora del Imperio del Tahuantinsuyo. La restauradora de la unidad del mundo. Ella, la india quiteña, todo amor y sexo, es la verdadera madre, la auténtica matriz."⁶ Ironically, however, besides helping the Inca extend his empire through northern Ecuador, Paccha's relationship with Huayna-Capac greatly intensified the rivalry between Cuzco and

Quito. The subsequent civil war between Huáscar and Atahualpa destroyed Inca unity and favored considerably Pizarro's conquest of the region.

Later national heroines of Ecuadorian history appeared during the Independence period, and the most important figures were Manuela Sáenz, the Marquesa de Solanda, and Manuela Cañizares. As in the case of Paccha, love and passion were the key to these early eighteenth-century women's fame: Sáenz captivated Bolívar, Solanda enchanted Sucre, and Cañizares, a madame, supposedly plotted with revolutionaries when allowing them to conspire in secret rooms of her brothel.

Generally speaking, during the revolutionary period there were no Ecuadorian military leaders comparable to Bolívar, Sucre, Páez, or San Martín. Consequently, since Ecuador's chief heroes of the period (Bolívar and Sucre) were Venezuelans, Carrión, among other national writers, attempts to fill the void by extolling women's participation in the struggle against Spain: "No tuvimos héroes con espada en las luchas por la libertad. Tuvimos, sí, heroínas con abanico y miriñaque, ojos asesinos y valor para dejarlo todo, para ir por sobre todo--en una sociedad hipócrita, tragahostias y cuentachismes."⁷

Accordingly, Sáenz was swept away by her passion for Bolívar, and despite heavy social criticism, she sacrificed her reputation and honor when deciding to abandon her husband and follow Bolívar. Later, in a letter addressed to her legal spouse, she explained: "Sé muy bien que no puedo unirme a él [Bolívar] por las leyes del honor, como tú llamas, pero, ¿crees que me siento menos honrada porque sea mi amante y no mi marido? ¡Oh! No vivo para los prejuicios de la sociedad, que sólo fueron inventados para que nos atormentemos el uno al otro."⁸ In

effect unlike other passionate relationships, many Ecuadorians believe Sáenz's love for Bolívar was noble and of heroic proportions, particularly because the romance made her a firm believer in Bolívar's ideals which she relentlessly fought to establish in Latin America.

Mariana de Jesús is another major figure in Ecuadorian history; she is Ecuador's patron saint who renounced her wealth and noble position in society in order to dedicate herself totally to Christ and the Church. Moreover, in 1645, a year in which Quito was beset by a series of earthquakes and a mysterious epidemic, she is said to have saved the city from disaster when, during a Church service, she publicly offered her life for the well-being of Quito. Several days later the crisis ended, and at the same time, Mariana de Jesús became seriously ill and died. In conclusion, "Mariana de Jesús puede ampliamente ser llamada patriota, porque ofreció su vida por la patria, y pasó en diario sacrificios implorando a Dios felicidad para ella."⁹

Up to this point, the discussion has concentrated on Carrión's interpretation of women's historical importance, not for lack of other sources, but because of his unique ideas. While other Ecuadorians know about their heroines and have written about them, the striking aspect of Carrión's thinking is his belief that women represent the *essence* of Ecuadorian national history: "Nuestra participación central a la historia, ha sido la acción y la pasión de las mujeres. Más pasión que acción."¹⁰ Thus, the Amazons, Paccha, Sáenz and her contemporaries, and Mariana de Jesús are not only national heroines who have contributed to Ecuador's growth and tradition, but according to Carrión, they are also the nucleus of this "pueblo hijo de mujer."

Whether or not heroism can be defined in terms of love and passion, in terms of a madame who allows her clients to conspire in her world of sexual merrymaking, is not of interest here. The chief concern is how a small country in search of national heroes has turned to its women, a phenomenon which might suggest Ecuador has maintained certain traces of a matriarchal society in which women have attained positions of equal prestige to those of men. This concept has been advanced in several studies, particularly in those works already cited which deal with the Independence era.

Turning to the twentieth century, Morayma Ofyr Carvajal offers a similar view of women's supposed significance in modern Ecuadorian society; *Galería del espíritu: Mujeres de mi patria*¹¹ is an extensive collection of biographical sketches of the nation's most important women: historical figures, social workers, educators, artists, poetesses, and prose writers. In general, Carvajal points out that women have been principal leaders in the fields of education and social work during this century: they have founded orphanages, hospitals, public educational programs, and patriotic organizations.

This same optimistic and favorable description of female involvement is seen in Piedad Larrea Borja's essay, "Biografía de la mujer en el Ecuador"; in Isabel Moscoso Dávila's *Abanico de recuerdos*; and in Zoila Rendón's "La mujer en los diversos organismos humanos."¹² By and large, as Rendón explains:

No nos falta en nuestra historia las patricias que ayudaron a nuestra emancipación política y son la gloria de la Patria; y, después, en cualquier conflicto guerrero, mujeres valientes que no se intimidan, ni con el estruendo del cañón, ni el crepitar de las ametralladoras, dejando

así ver que la mujer ecuatoriana, es tan apta y valiente como el hombre. Tenemos doctoras en jurisprudencia, medicina, farmacia, adontólogos, [sic] ingenieras y contabilistas tituladas, aparte de bachilleres en ciencias de educación y ciclo general de cultura.¹³

Notwithstanding women's supposed importance in Ecuadorian history, it has been generally believed that they have not contributed significantly to national letters. Besides the chapters of poetesses and prose writers in Carvajal's *Galería del espíritu: Mujeres de mi patria*, and several articles written by such people as Zoila María Castro, Alejandro Andrade Coello, Víctor Manuel Rendón, and Mary Corylé, most critics and scholars have foregone studying at length the women writers. Indeed it seems paradoxical that women should occupy such a prominent position in history and such an inconsequential one in literature. Moreover, whereas women's reputed involvement in Ecuador's history would suggest the existence of an atmosphere in which they could function and assert themselves fully, the void found in literature tends to negate, in part, the "pueblo hijo de mujer" concept.

If as Lucien Goldmann has said "la obra [literaria] forma parte del conjunto de la realidad,"¹⁴ it can also be assumed that the absence of a significant body of literature debilitates the portrait of that society's reality. With respect to Ecuador, it would appear the dearth of female authors offers a more accurate description of women's place in Ecuadorian society than their vaunted historical role in shaping the nation. It must be borne in mind that many of the so-called heroines did not participate in history with a conscious notion of their roles or because of an atmosphere that encouraged women *qua* women to take an active part in society. Rather, female presence and involvement in

Ecuadorian history were frequently chance occurrences. Paccha, for example, was not concerned about unifying her people with the Incas in order to avoid war when she fell in love with Huayna-Capac; nor were the Amazons identified exclusively with what are presently Ecuador's boundaries. In effect, while the historical figures have been able to achieve fame without any specific preparation or training, the women writers have not realized their potential because they usually have been denied indispensable opportunities. Hence, women's limited literary production suggests that their past has not been as glorious as some people would like to believe. The "answer to why there are no great women artists, or so few women artists at all, lies not in the nature of individual genius or the lack of it, but in the nature of given social institutions and what they forbid or encourage in various classes or groups of individuals."¹⁵

Generally speaking, the problems faced by women writers have been the same ones all women have had to confront at one time or another: lack of education, social prejudices, church domination, and women's ignorance of their own plight. In 1952, María Piedad Castillo de Leví, a journalist and the ex-president of the Inter-American Commission of Women, complained about Ecuadorian women's lack of political power. Despite constituting the majority of the population, and despite having been the first women in Latin America to receive national suffrage (1929), female voters continued to be ignored by male politicians. Moreover, their names remained absent from party ballots, and there was no official representation of the country's female interests.¹⁶

In 1963, a group of Ecuadorian women attended the Segundo Congreso de Mujeres de Toda América in Havana and criticized sharply women's situation in Ecuador. The delegation condemned male employers who abused legislation to exploit the woman worker; domestics and rural workers were described as unprotected, underpaid, and often sexually assaulted by their bosses. In addition, illiteracy was claimed to be highest among women, "lo que paraliza el ascenso de nuestro sexo a la amplia cultura y a la concepción real de los problemas generales que particularmente nos afectan."¹⁷

The problems have continued as in other countries: Ecuadorian society still insists that women be mothers above all else; there are still limited day care centers for the children of working-mothers; married women are still legally inferior to their husbands;¹⁸ and social class differences continue to make difficult the creation of a united feminist organization. Moreover, although Ecuadorian laws frequently have favored and protected women, particularly labor legislation, women have not attained their equality: i.e., laws are decreed but rarely enforced. In effect, despite certain legal reforms, greater educational opportunities, and liberal influences from abroad, Ecuadorian women go on living in a world similar to that of other females, a world beset by numerous contradictions: "on the one hand, they [have] most of the legal freedoms, the literal assurances that they [are] considered full political citizens of society--and yet they [have] no power. They have educational opportunities--and yet [are] unable, and not expected, to employ them."¹⁹

If Ecuadorian women, in general, have suffered because of the many inequities and contradictions inherent in society, the female

authors have been the victims of a more stifling plight--not only have they been oppressed as women, but also as professional writers. One key factor which helps explain the dearth of women writers in Ecuador is the long tradition of limited education for school-aged girls, a reality sharply criticized by Juan León Mera during the nineteenth century.²⁰ Unfortunately, change and improvement have occurred very gradually. Although before the turn of the century, and especially during Eloy Alfaro's liberal movement (1895-1912), women were supposedly granted greater educational opportunities (admission to the universities was opened to women in 1896), little progress was realized. It is important to note that the first normal school for women was founded in 1901 (Colegio Normal Manuela Cañizares, Quito), and in addition, it was not until 1935 that Ecuador established its first non-religious all girls high school which awarded the *bachillerato* (Colegio Nacional 24 de Mayo, Quito).²¹

Clearly, social prejudices and stereotypes have been the main obstacles to developing women's education in Ecuador. Indeed, since female roles were traditionally limited to that of daughter, wife, and mother, sewing and cooking were considered more suitable for women than science, philosophy, and mathematics. Also, the importance of virginity and honor in Latin American society, in general, and in Ecuador, in particular, convinced many of the need for women to stay at home. Essentially, then, as pointed out by Hipatia Cárdenas de Bustamente, social attitudes have long been instrumental in limiting women's cultural growth: "Aquí en el Ecuador la mujer ha vivido siempre relegada exclusivamente al hogar, cohibida y amedrentada por la preponderancia y pretensión del hombre."²²

In short, for many potential authors the lack of education coupled with required motherhood were and are presently too much to overcome. That is to say, while the uneducated female rarely has perceived her latent talents, the intellectual woman, the one aware of her abilities and capable of becoming a writer, usually has accepted the roles imposed by society because she has lacked the moral and economic support necessary to resist successfully the dominant social pressures of her day. With regard to women writers, in general, Anna Garlin Spencer has observed:

Anyone can see that to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on the knee in the kitchen, with the constant calls to cooking and other details of housework to punctuate the paragraphs, was a more difficult achievement than to write it at leisure in a quiet room. . . . No record, however, can even name the women of talent who were so submerged by child-bearing and its duties, and "general housework," that they had to leave their poems and stories all unwritten. Moreover, the obstacles to intellectual development and achievement which marriage and maternity interpose . . . are not the only ones that must be noted. It is not alone the fact that women have generally had to spend most of their strength in caring for others that has handicapped them in individual effort; but also that they have almost universally had to care wholly for themselves.²³

Eugenia Viteri and Alicia Yáñez Coşsío, two contemporary Ecuadorian authors, also refer to the writer/mother conflict as a major obstacle to their literary development. They both have complained about insufficient time, fatigue, domestic responsibilities, and in the case of Yáñez, children's resentment at being ignored while their mother writes.²⁴ In addition, another complication for the contemporary woman writer in Ecuador is her frequent need to work outside of the home to supplement her husband's income. Consequently, in terms of role conflicts, the female author's current situation in many cases is worse than that of past generations because she is now confronted with a triple role in society rather than with a double one.

Of course, since Ecuadorians form a society in which people spend a great deal of time gossiping and criticizing others, the most serious obstacle women writers in Ecuador have had to overcome has been fear. It should be borne in mind that traditionally women were supposed to exemplify morality and virtue at all times, and therefore, those who were fulfilling their domestic duties were assumed to be unaware of certain social evils, and incapable of describing the crude scenes of rural and urban Ecuador that writers of the 1930's were producing. Moreover, since authors have frequently been identified with their works, many women realized that certain themes and literary characterizations could threaten their social reputations. Consequently, to avoid being misunderstood by the reading public, and subsequently ostracized by society, many women simply have discounted the possibility of a writing career in Ecuador.

While the lack of education, the writer/mother conflict, and fear of social opinion are three basic reasons which help explain the absence of greater female participation in literature, a discussion about the problems which beset women authors would be incomplete without referring to the difficulties all Ecuadorian writers must face. With the possible exception of a few writers (i.e., Montalvo, Carrera Andrade, Icaza, de la Cuadra), Ecuador has not produced great names in literature comparable to such outstanding Latin American authors as Darío, Martí, Borges, Paz, Cortázar, or Carpentier. The first factor which accounts for this lack of greatness is the dearth of publishing houses in Ecuador, an obstacle to literary development which has stifled all national writers. Since many authors have been forced to publish their own

works, and because few have possessed the necessary capital, a significant amount of literature has remained unpublished.²⁵ Even today authors find it difficult to publish; the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, Ecuador's major publishing house since 1944, presently charges the writers for the paper used because of limited and inadequate budgets. Thus, even when books are printed the number of copies of each edition is greatly reduced, a fact which implies that authors cannot live from their writing career alone. Angel Rojas has commented about the absence of professional writers in Ecuador:

La notoriedad alcanzada por el relato ecuatoriano y la consiguiente acogida de la producción de nuestros cultivadores de la obra de ficción no permite, con todo, el nacimiento del escritor profesional. Así, citando sólo los más notables, José de la Cuadra vivía de su profesión de abogado, Humberto Salvador de su cátedra, Jorge Icaza de un pequeño negocio de librería, Demetrio Aguilera de la fabricación de fideos, . . . La novela ni siquiera a Icaza, el más leído de todos nuestros escritores, le da para vivir.²⁶

A second major problem for writers has been the small number of people which make up Ecuador's reading public. Currently, for example, in Guayaquil (the nation's largest city which has approximately 800,000 inhabitants) there are only three bookstores that sell primarily works that are not of a purely technical (i.e., law, engineering, medicine) or commercial (i.e., detective stories, magazines, "pulp" literature) nature.²⁷ Unfortunately, the present situation has changed very little since 1948, when Rojas wrote: "El mercado del libro casi no existía entre nosotros. En Guayaquil, ciudad de más de cien mil habitantes, hubo, durante largos años, una sola librería, y esa, extranjera. Y en Quito, una también. Del mercado del libro nacional, ni qué hablar."²⁸

In short, an attempt to be a professional writer in Ecuador has been an heroic task: the lack of publishers, a reduced reading public, and the economic needs and obligations in life make it virtually impossible to write regularly. With respect to women writers, their situation becomes even more discouraging when keeping in mind that, besides the difficulties common to their profession, they also must deal with the injustices suffered by their sex: "¡Triste es decirlo! Aquí, en el Ecuador, la literatura de los nacionales está muy a la baja. Y si la produce una mujer, a quien, con un concepto errado, sólo se le concede primacia 'en el arte de hacer hijos,' peor todavía. Por eso ella tiene que sostener toda una lucha, con un ambiente enteramente hostil, . . . para poder destacarse, para poder sobresalir y mirar, más de cerca, la aurora anunciante del sol prometedor."²⁹

To sum up, this chapter has presented briefly two contrasting views of Ecuadorian women: their role as historical heroines and that of writers of prose. The women of history described by national writers represent a vital part in Ecuador's past, and might suggest that they traditionally have occupied a position of glory and high esteem--though somewhat idealized. As several writers have explained, women have contributed significantly to the nation's organization and development, and during the present century, have been instrumental in promoting social programs and reforms. Upon considering the realities of the female authors, however, one encounters the suffering and injustices women in Ecuador have always experienced. From this point of view, Ecuadorian women no longer appear as central figures in society, but rather as victims of limited opportunities and social prejudices. Indeed the paradox of

women's importance in history and their assumed insignificance in literature is a vexing reality whose nature will be examined in the following chapters that deal specifically with women writers and their perceptions of the Ecuadorian female's actual place in society.

Notes
Chapter I

¹Cheri Register, "American Feminist Literary Criticism: A Bibliographical Introduction," in *Feminist Literary Criticism: Explorations in Theory*, ed. Josephine Donovan (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1975), p. 6.

²Cited by Register, "American Feminist Literary Criticism: A Bibliographical Introduction," p. 5.

³*El cuento de la patria: Breve historia del Ecuador*, 2nd ed. (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1973), pp. 79-120. The following comments on female historical figures, in large part, are based on Carrión's discussion in Chapter IV ("Pueblo hijo de mujer") of the cited work. Originally, this chapter was published as an article: "Pueblos hijos de mujer," *Cuadernos Americanos*, CLXXIX, 6 (November-December 1971), 76-86.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 94-95. Some other writers who have written about Ecuadorian heroines of the Independence period are: Augusto Arias, "Las mujeres de la independencia," *El Libertador* (April-June 1945), pp. 41-42; Piedad Larrea Borja, "Biografía de la mujer en el Ecuador," in *Ensayos* (Quito: "Fray Jodoco Ricke," 1946), pp. 51-89; Raquel Verdesoto de Romo Dávila, *Manuela Sáenz*, 2 vols. (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1963); and Alfonso Rumazo González, *Manuela Sáenz: La Libertadora del Libertador*, Biblioteca de Autores Ecuatorianos, No. 32 (Guayaquil: Clásicos Ariel, n.d.).

⁸Cited in Matilde de Ortega, "Manuela Sáenz y su época," *Letras del Ecuador*, XII, 106 (April-December 1956), 10.

⁹Victoria Váscquez Cuvi, *Vida de Mariana de Jesús* (Quito: Imprenta "Bona Spes," 1940), p. 35.

¹⁰*El cuento de la patria: Breve historia del Ecuador*, p. 79.

¹¹Quito: Editorial "Fray Jodoco Ricke," 1949.

¹²Isabel Moscoso Dávila, *Abanico de recuerdos*, 2 vols. (Cuenca: Editorial Monsalve, 1970; 1974); Zoila Rendón de Mosquera, "La mujer en los diversos organismos humanos," *Previsión social*, 22 (September-December 1948; January 1949), 150-162.

¹³"La mujer en los diversos organismos humanos," p. 162.

¹⁴Barthes, Lefebvre, Goldmann *et al.*, *Literatura y sociedad*, p. 73.

¹⁵Linda Nochlin, "Why Are There No Great Women Artists?," in *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, ed. Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran (New York: New American Library, 1971), p. 493.

¹⁶María Piedad Castillo de Leví, "Las próximas elecciones y la actuación de las mujeres," *El Telégrafo*, 31 May 1952, p. 4.

¹⁷"Informe nacional del Ecuador," *Obra revolucionaria*, II (January 1963), 98. The Assembly took place on January 11, 1963. Ecuador was represented by the Unión de Mujeres de Guayaquil, El Comité de Auspicios, and the Asociación Femenina Universitaria. Marta Feijóo was president of the delegation.

¹⁸An interesting study on married women's legal status has recently been published by Jorge Maldonado Rennella: *I El Código Civil del Ecuador y las reformas de 1970: un retroceso en la historia jurídica del país; II La situación de la mujer casada en la legislación civil* (Guayaquil: Departamento de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Guayaquil, 1974).

¹⁹Shulamith Firestone, "On American Feminism," in *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, pp. 677-678.

²⁰Cited in Angel F. Rojas, *La novela ecuatoriana*, p. 25.

²¹See Alejandro Andrade Coello, "Cultura femenina: Floración intelectual de la mujer ecuatoriana en el siglo XX," *El Libertador* V, 71-73 (July-September 1942), 317.

²²*Oro, rojo y azul* (Quito: Editorial Artes Gráficas, 1943), p. 40.

²³"Woman's Share in Social Culture," in *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings*, p. 284.

²⁴These comments were made during two separate interviews with the authors while researching in Ecuador: Eugenia Viteri, March 13, 1975; Alicia Yáñez Cossío, March 20, 1975.

²⁵Many works written by women have gone unpublished. Some examples are: Zoila Rendón de Mosquera's *Expiación* (novel), *El dolor de amar* (novel), *Leyendas ecuatorianas* (short stories); Aurora Estrada y Ayala's *En el puente* (novel); Mary Corylé's *Conscriptos* (novel), *Hombre* (novel); Laura Pérez de Oleas Zambrano's *El rostro del silencio* (novel), *Del sueño y la vigilia* (short stories).

²⁶*La novela ecuatoriana*, p. 223.

²⁷The three stores are: Librería Científica, Librería Cervantes, and Su Librería.

²⁸*La novela ecuatoriana*, p. 95.

²⁹José Ayala Cabanilla, "Mireya Romero Plaza de Bravomalo, poetisa y novelista," in *La pena fuimos nosotras*, Mireya de Bravomalo (Guayaquil: Imprenta Municipal, 1953), pp. 1-2.

CHAPTER II

EARLY FEMALE VOICES IN ECUADORIAN PROSE LITERATURE

Before the mid-nineteenth century, the principal women known to have written prose in Ecuador were three nuns who described at great length their mystical experiences and overall struggle against worldly temptations. However, since Teresa de Jesús Cepeda (1566-1610), Sor Gertrudis de San Ildefonso (1652-1709), and Sor Catalina de Jesús María Herrera (1717-1795) limited the focus of their writing to a totally religious context, they offer little information about colonial Ecuador, in general, and the problems common to the period's women, in particular. The only exception to this observation seems to be a comment made by Sor Catalina de Jesús who briefly alluded to the need for women to write despite apparent ridicule and discouragement from men:

A las mujeres me parece que hace más impresión lo que han escrito sus semejantes; y también porque son las mujeres más allegadas a la sencillez y llaneza de las razones: y por ellas principalmente me parece que ha querido Dios que escriban también mujeres: y también para confusión de los hombres doctos del mundo, como se lo ha dicho a sus Siervas su Divina Majestad; pero ellos, no se quieren confundir, sino burlarse; aunque esto no sucede en los hombres verdaderamente espirituales, sino en los doctos presumidos que no aprenden en la escuela del Espíritu Santo, sino en la escuela de su ingenio meramente humano.¹

Naturally, because these early writers confined themselves to the Church, and because they were never interested in communicating with a large general reading public, their diaries and autobiographical pieces had very little impact on later female authors in Ecuador.² Therefore,

it is not until several nineteenth-century women experimented publicly with literature (i.e., theatre, short story, essay, and poetry) that one can refer to the actual beginnings of a literary tradition among female writers. For the purposes of this study, then, the first major female writers to appear in national letters were Dolores Veintemilla de Galindo (1829-1857), principally a poetess who introduced romanticism to Ecuadorian literature, and Marietta de Veintemilla (1858-1907), Ecuador's first well-known and prominent woman prose writer.

With regard to Veintemilla de Galindo, in addition to having written ten poems and three prose compositions, she is especially significant in national literary history because the tragic events which led to her suicide illustrate some of the chief obstacles women writers traditionally have confronted in Ecuador. Turning specifically to her prose pieces, "Recuerdos" and "Mi fantasía" were romantic works: the first evoked her happy childhood; the second exalted the imagination's powers to isolate her from life's daily sorrows: "Entonces, absorta de felicidad, vuelvo en las alas de mi ilusión hasta tí [la fantasía], y allá en los cielos donde la felicidad y las miserias de la tierra no existen, soy feliz como los ángeles delante del trono de Dios, pasándome anonadada delante de tí [sic] y deslumbrada con tu brillo."³

Of greater importance, however, was "Al público," a public letter written in response to a wave of social criticism directed against her, and in which she defended her right to become involved in important social matters. According to historical accounts, because Veintemilla de Galindo openly supported Tiburcio Lucero, an Indian accused of parricide and sentenced to death, Archbishop Solano and numerous

contemporary writers saw fit to question publicly her behavior and motives. In reply to these attacks, she wrote:

Hé aquí lo que puede hacer una mujer calumniada, cuando como yo tiene el derecho de levantar su frente pura, ante todos los hombres sin temor de que haya uno que tenga la facultad de hacerla doblar ruborizada;--hé aquí lo que hago en cumplimiento del deber que tengo, como mujer de honor, de justificarme ante la sociedad digna, cuyo juicio y opinión tan sólo temo y respeto. Así, pues, si en adelante se vuelve a atacarme bajo la capa del anónimo y permanezco en silencio, espero no se crea callo porque acepto mi infamación, sino que, me contento con entregarlos a sus remordimientos, maldición eterna, verdadero castigo de los criminales.⁴

Similarly, in a poem entitled "A mis enemigos," she implored: "¿Por qué, por qué queréis que yo sofoque/Lo que en mi pensamiento osa vivir?"⁵ In effect, Veintemilla de Galindo's confrontation with adverse public opinion reflects how society traditionally has opposed women's efforts to challenge the *status quo* and/or participate in controversial socio-political issues. Moreover, although her literary career was short-lived, and her prose extremely limited, her suffering and eventual suicide clearly point out the hostile environment in which free thinking women had to work and struggle in Ecuador.

Notwithstanding Veintemilla de Galindo's failure to overcome the social pressures which eventually destroyed her, and despite the general belief that women should stay at home, the latter part of the nineteenth century did produce one woman in particular who succeeded in breaking with traditional stereotypes and taboos. Indeed Marietta de Veintemilla became a dominant force in Ecuadorian society, particularly during her uncle's dictatorship (General Ignacio de Veintemilla, 1876-1883).⁶ According to Enrique Garcés:

Ella es la que insiste en el arreglo del parque quiteño llamado "La Alameda." La sociedad era muy timorata y no permitía que las señoritas salieran a la calle sino acompañadas de sus padres y por lo menos unas tres criadas. Doña Marietta arremetió contra esta costumbre y valiéndose del apoyo que le prestaban unas seis o diez chiquillas de las "mejores familias," hizo la campaña en favor del paseo en la Alameda. Fueron ellas, con trajes llamativos y sombreros de modelos extraños, a dar vueltas y vueltas por el jardín quiteño. . . . Doña Marietta había realizado una verdadera revolución en 1878 con estas armas singulares: paseo en los parques . . . ; vestidos ligeros sin ese pesado tejido negro que la beatería imponían [sic] a las señoritas; posibilidad de que la gente joven se reúna, haga amistades y surja el amor.⁷

With respect to politics, because she was her uncle's most loyal and faithful supporter, the General entrusted her with many political assignments; for example, during the General's absences from Quito, she was frequently left in charge of government business. Also, it was she who directed the armed forces on two occasions when defending the regime against General Veintemilla's enemies. In short, according to Pareja Diezcanseco who has commented on Marietta de Veintemilla's participation in Ecuadorian politics:

En Quito, lo hizo todo Marieta [sic]. Desconfiaba ella del Ministro de Guerra. Dejólo entonces que pusiera al ejército en las calles, y, de pronto, en la madrugada, delante de las tropas, lo llama traidor, lo hace preso, y proclama la dictadura de su tío. Los soldados, embriagados por su valor y audacia, la proclaman Generala. Desde entonces, Marieta de Veintemilla [sic] es la Generalita que sabe cómo combatir y mandar tropas, además de cómo seducir en los salones con su singular belleza.

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En esta batalla de Quito [la del 10 de enero de 1883], fue nuevamente la heroína Marieta de Veintemilla [sic]: asumió del mando de las tropas y organizó la defensa como un soldado veterano. Ella dirigió el fuego de los cañones. Ella manejó el fusil. Morían en sus brazos los soldados, estimulados con la prueba de su belleza.

Jadeante y más hermosa se la veía, cuando cayó prisionera. En la cárcel permanecería ocho meses, y luego al destierro, al que marchó orgullosa de haber sabido defender al tío, que llamaba "papá Ignacio."⁸

Above all, however, Marietta de Veintemilla was the first Ecuadorian woman to play a dominant role in literary circles: "Marietta es el centro galante de la sociedad quiteña. Sus habitaciones en Palacio [sic] se convierten en un cenáculo literario, lleno de poetas ecuatorianos, colombianos, peruanos y de otros países. Personaje intelectual que arriba a Quito, ingresará a sus salones."⁹ Furthermore, she was the first woman prose writer to be accepted by critics as a significant and influential figure in national letters. Angel Rojas, for example, besides claiming Veintemilla was one of the four major Ecuadorian writers of the nineteenth century (the other three were: Juan León Mera, Juan Montalvo, and Carlos R. Tobar), also comments that "Ricardo Palma expresó la admiración que le causaba el estilo de Marietta de Veintimilla [sic], al cual encontró algo de la sobriedad de Tácito."¹⁰

Clearly, her most important work was *Páginas del Ecuador*,¹¹ a long polemical essay she wrote after being released from prison and exiled to Peru. Similar to Sarmiento and Montalvo, Veintemilla was a political liberal who used her essay to attack the period's social and political ills, and to analyze the determining factors in her nation's development. Interestingly, because of her romantic spirit, she disregarded the traditional literary rules of order and form, and presented her ideas by combining such diverse elements as first person narration, third person commentary, and highly emotional attacks against her political enemies.

Upon beginning *Páginas del Ecuador*, she wrote: "Mi empeño es algo más elevado, pues conduce a hacer luz sobre acontecimientos políticos

del Ecuador, en los que si me cupo una pequeña parte, no puedo menos que consagrarles este recuerdo, haciendo un llamamiento a la verdad, a la justicia" ¹² Further on she continued:

Amalgama de hechos heroicos y maquinaciones ruines; auroras de libertad con crepúsculos de humillación esclavócrata; santo anhelo de mejoramiento nacional y postración de fuerzas por la lucha entre lo bueno y lo malo: he allí el resumen de esa historia que todavía no se ha escrito con la entera independencia que se demanda, y a la que es justo atender con unas páginas siquiera, que mañana sirvan entre documentos mil de su especie, para el sereno juicio de la posteridad. ¹³

It should be pointed out that due to her use of first person narration when referring to her own participation in Ecuadorian history, Isaac Barrera and Angel Rojas have included *Páginas del Ecuador* in their discussions on the Ecuadorian novel. ¹⁴ Indeed the work acquires a semblance of fiction as the numerous metaphors and constant use of the imperfect tense decrease the distance between the narrator and the material:

Mis obedientes servidores no se movían de sus puestos; el fuego que nuestros enemigos hacían desde la torre de San Agustín sobre el portal del Palacio, era tenaz y destructor. Caían al lado mío los soldados, pasando silenciosos de la vida a la muerte. Agitábales un estremecimiento [sic] instantáneo, sin que me fuera dado recoger las últimas miradas de esos héroes. El dolor mismo pasaba fugaz en mi espíritu, anestesiado por emociones tan variados como terribles. ¹⁵

El silencio y la lóbreguez reinaban en torno. De cuando en cuando, los silbadores proyectiles iban a clavarse en los muros del edificio. Parecía que el ángel de la destrucción buscaba entre las tinieblas a quien señalar con sus caricias de muerte; sintiendo yo, en los revueltos giros del plomo, algo como el chasquido siniestro de sus alas. ¹⁶

Notwithstanding the novelistic elements, however, *Páginas del Ecuador* offers many penetrating observations about the problems that have beset Ecuador and other Latin American countries. Upon concluding her study, she observed:

Los pueblos hispano-americanos, arrastran casi todos, una existencia idéntica.

Hay cualidades y defectos comunes de raza, que no les permiten entrar de lleno en el camino del orden. Siguiendo el paralelo de sus volcanes, viven con estremecimientos [sic] revolucionarios, periódicos y fatales, que van sin embargo, disminuyendo en intensidad conforme se ilustran las masas, cuya quietud y hábitos de trabajo corresponden al enfriamiento gradual de las materias terrestres en ignición.

El Ecuador, aunque desgraciado hasta el día, no tiene sin embargo, por qué perder la fe en sus destinos futuros.

Los pueblos más grandes y prósperos hoy, han tenido también su noche negra de horrores.¹⁷

Besides her political and historical concerns, Veintemilla also wrote about women and the need for them to accept the challenge of being active citizens willing to defend their human rights and ideals. In "Madame Roland,"¹⁸ a short feminist essay, the author presented Madame Roland as a symbol of women's potential to participate directly in society and to contribute significantly to history. Similar to her own life, the French revolutionary was an example of what women could do if they would free themselves from the social roles imposed upon them by a male-dominated society. In effect, Veintemilla categorically rejected man's supposed superiority over women:

Esta noble figura [Madame Roland] de la revolución francesa, se elevará siempre como una prueba de que el espíritu no se conforma a las circunscripciones de la materia, y que para elevarse muy alto no necesita los músculos vigorosos que ostenta el hombre. Propio es, sin embargo, de la vanidad masculina negar en lo absoluto a la mujer ciertas cualidades, y varón hay de buena fe que se cree superior a la Roland, a la Stael, o la Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, sólo porque levanta un peso de doscientas libras y está dispuesto a dejarse matar en cualquier lance.¹⁹

Generally speaking, although she was optimistic about the literary efforts being made by her female contemporaries abroad and their promising future, Veintemilla deplored the South American woman's overall situation:

A despecho de nuestra civilización, la mujer sudamericana es la esclava recién manumisa que ensaya sus primeros pasos en el terreno de la literatura, donde felizmente ha cosechado ya grandes triunfos precursores de otros de más valía con el transcurso del tiempo. Ella no puede aún aventurarse en el campo especulativo sin la obligada compañía de un hombre; ella en el aislamiento, no encuentra ni siquiera respeto fuera de su hogar, pues le asechan por una parte al brutalidad [sic] callejera y por otra la murmuración social, cuando no las feroces dentelladas de la calumnia. Para llevar al poder una idea, aunque sea la más pura y desinteresada, se expone al miserable tratamiento de "favorita." No tiene, en una palabra, la culta, racional independencia que la mujer de Europa o Norteamérica, y sus impetus generosos, mal comprendidos ante los ojos del vulgo, la empequeñecen.²⁰

Finally, Veintemilla also utilized the essay as a means of demonstrating her broad culture and vast knowledge of philosophy and science, publishing such works as *Conferencia sobre psicología moderna*²¹ and a brief composition dedicated to Doctor Agustín Leonidas Yerovi.²² In short, her dynamic and unorthodox role in history, her creative efforts in literature, her feminist ideas, and her understanding of scientific topics that were normally associated with male thinkers all point to Veintemilla's extraordinary ability to compete successfully in a society traditionally dominated by man. Jaime Chaves Granja summarizes her achievements as follows:

Una mujer culta, destacadamente culta, con un rico conocimiento de los progresos de la literatura, del arte y de la ciencia en el Viejo y sabio Continente: eso fue Marietta de Veintemilla. Un caso singular y singularísimo; y no sólo para el medio ecuatoriano, sino para el que había en todas las latitudes de América. Se puede comprender fácilmente que una excepción tan descomunal, tenía que ser sin remedio el blanco de la incomprensión. ¿Cómo podían comprender a doña Marietta las gentes de ese tiempo aferradas al tradicionalismo más tenebroso, a las fórmulas sociales de convento y mojigatería? Si aquella Mujer se mostraba libre de prejuicios, valerosa en la expresión de sus conocimientos e inquietudes, temeraria en las actitudes que asumía, no podía ciertamente ser perdonada por una sociedad que todavía suponía que era un delito para la

mujer saber leer y escribir, un delito para la
santidad convencional.²³

In conclusion, although women's literary production before the twentieth century was scarce, the writers discussed in this chapter were important antecedents and precursors who initiated the gradual development of women's prose in Ecuador. More specifically, it is not surprising that the first three women who attempted to write were nuns during the Colony since education, an essential for almost all aspiring artists, was controlled by the Church. Later, in the early years of the Republic, when Dolores Veintemilla de Galindo tried to move away from the religious themes usually associated with women, Ecuadorian society still proved to be unwilling to accept women's efforts to become involved in more secular, worldly affairs. However, with the advent of political liberalism during the last few decades of the nineteenth century, Marietta de Veintemilla was able to challenge the *status quo* and help usher in new opportunities for women. In effect, she may be thought of as a transitional figure who led Ecuadorian women into the twentieth century, a modern world seemingly more tolerant of women's professional and cultural aspirations.

Notes
Chapter II

¹Cited in Fray Alfonso A. Jerves, ed., *Florilegio doctrinal de la Venerable Madre Catalina Luisa de Jesús María Herrera religiosa del Monasterio de Santa Catalina de Sena de Quito* (Quito: Imprenta de Santo Domingo, 1932), p. 15.

²It should be borne in mind that their prose did not circulate outside of the Church until this century, when several scholars began publishing the works. Manuel María Pólit has made the most significant contributions regarding Teresa de Jesús Cepeda; besides studying her life, he also has published some of the nun's letters. See: Manuel María Pólit, "La primera escritora ecuatoriana," *La Unión Literaria*, VI, 2 (July 1916), 49; *La familia de Santa Teresa en América y la primera carmelita americana* (Friburgo de Brisgovia, Alemania: B. Herder, 1905). With respect to Sor Gertrudis de San Ildefonso, see selections in: Padre Miguel Sánchez Astudillo, ed., *Prosistas de la colonia: Siglos XV-XVIII*, Biblioteca Ecuatoriana Mínima (Mexico: Editorial J. M. Cajica Jr., S.A., 1960), pp. 217-223. Interestingly, her work was compiled in 1700 by her confessor, Padre Martín de la Cruz, and entitled *La perla mística escondida en la concha de la humildad*. According to Sánchez Astudillo, however, the three volumes which make up the work were never published. Turning to Sor Catalina de Jesús María Herrera, Fray Alfonso A. Jerves has been the major scholar responsible for making her work known. Besides the work cited in the previous note, Jerves edited Sor Catalina's autobiography: *Secretos entre el alma y Dios o Autobiografía de la Venerable Madre Sor Catalina de Jesús María Herrera* (Quito: Editorial "Santo Domingo," 1950).

³*Producciones literarias*, ed., Celiano Monge (Quito: Editorial de Proaño y Delgado, 1908), pp. 19-20. This collection contains Veintemilla de Galindo's entire literary production (ten poems and three prose compositions).

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶Aside from her overbearing personality and a growing tendency toward liberalism in late nineteenth-century Ecuador, one must not overlook her uncle's political power as a key factor in explaining her ability to dominate the social pressures which earlier had destroyed Veintemilla de Galindo. In effect, her uncle's political position gave Veintemilla a power base unknown to most women in Ecuador.

⁷*Marietta de Veintemilla* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1949), pp. 62-63.

⁸*Historia de la República: El Ecuador desde 1830 a nuestros días.*
I (Guayaquil: Comograf, S. A., n.d.). 153-156.

⁹Enrique Garcés, *Marietta de Veintemilla*, p. 60.

¹⁰*La novela ecuatoriana*, p. 66.

¹¹Lima: Imprenta Liberal de F. Masías y Compañía, 1890.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁴See: Rojas, *La novela ecuatoriana*; Barrera, *Historia de la literatura ecuatoriana*.

¹⁵*Páginas del Ecuador*, pp. 201-202.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 409-410.

¹⁸Reproduced in Enrique Garcés, *Marietta de Veintemilla*, pp. 165-173. This essay was originally part of a series of short essays entitled *Digresiones libres*; "Madame Roland" was first published in *Sociedad Jurídico-Literaria*, 24 (June 1904), n.p.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 167.

²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

²¹(Quito: Imprenta de la Universidad Central, 1907). This lecture was first presented on February 10, 1907 at the Universidad Central in Quito, during an assembly sponsored by the Sociedad Jurídico-Literaria.

²²*Digresiones libres: A la memoria del Doctor Agustín Leonidas Yeroivi* (Quito: Imprenta Municipal, 1904).

²³"El drama de una mujer escrito por la noble pasión de un hombre," introduction to Enrique Garcés, *Marietta de Veintemilla*, pp. xiii-xiv.

CHAPTER III

THE FEMINIST JOURNALS: A SOURCE OF LITERARY DEVELOPMENT

Although there were female intellectuals and writers in Ecuador before the twentieth century,¹ these women were from well-educated, and often, wealthy families capable of providing cultural opportunities unknown to most Ecuadorian women. It was not until Eloy Alfaro (Ecuadorian president during 1895-1901 and 1906-1911) and the political liberals instituted numerous reforms in female legislation that greater numbers of women found themselves sufficiently prepared culturally to begin writing steadily, conscious of specific objectives. Whereas most females of the past were consigned solely to their domestic duties, the advent of Ecuadorian liberalism made possible modern women's fuller participation in the mainstream of social and political realities: "Fue el Partido Liberal que, reformando la Constitución del 84, que prohibía a la mujer el ejercicio de sus derechos políticos, le abrió las puertas de las Universidades, le concedió el libre ejercicio de la administración de sus bienes como mujer casada; le concedió a la madre patria potestad; y en sus trascendentales Asambleas del 97 y del 29, aboliendo su incapacidad de deliberante y de votante, le concedió espontáneamente, carta de ciudadanía."² Moreover, female education was a serious concern for Alfaro who stated before the Constitutional Assembly of 1896-1897: "Justo es también ensanchar la esfera de protección abriendo a las mujeres las universidades de la República, a fin de que puedan dedicarse al

estudio de profesiones científicas y proporcionarles, igualmente, talleres adecuados para el aprendizaje de artes y oficios."³

Naturally, in spite of Alfaro's efforts to improve women's conditions, many traditional problems and injustices continued to victimize Ecuadorian females. Since political support for women's progress often failed to change people's concepts and prejudices, the well-intentioned laws did not reflect completely the social realities of the times. It was one thing to open the universities to women, but another to prepare them to compete successfully in higher education, and above all, to convince them of the need to continue their learning. Indeed much of society continued to believe that motherhood was a woman's principal purpose in life, and consequently, saw no need for most of the proposed liberal reforms. In fact, many Ecuadorians viewed the liberals' efforts to improve women's status in society as a direct attack against an established social order that had long been considered sacred (i.e., marriage, motherhood, and virginity).

Notwithstanding public opposition and resistance to official policies, however, the government's apparent interest in and support of women did draw attention to the latter's needs, and more importantly, it set the stage for a major literary awakening among women writers. In effect, with gradual gains in education and considerable governmental backing, scores of females made a conscious effort to express their ideas in writing, and to communicate with a reading public for the first time. Specifically, beginning with the *alfarista* era (the period of Eloy Alfaro's political dominance in Ecuador, 1895-1912), female activity in prose literature increased dramatically as a group of early twentieth-

century women writers began to publish a series of feminist reviews in which they championed such issues as equal rights and better educational opportunities. Moreover, besides serving as a forum for women's needs and interests, these journals also made a concerted effort to encourage aspiring female writers to express their views and to make known their literary talent.

Bearing in mind the difficulties all Ecuadorian authors have experienced when trying to publish, particularly before the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana was founded in 1944, it is not surprising these early women writers first turned to journalism as their principal means of expression. It should be remembered that articles prepared for newspapers, literary supplements, and the like did not require the same amount of dedication and continued effort as did creative fiction, a factor which traditionally has influenced in no small measure Ecuadorian letters: "La mayor parte de nuestros escritores rehuyó la obra continuada, que exigía constancia y dedicación, . . . Se contentó con la obra fragmentaria que no se oponía a la actualidad, a la atención del problema inmediato."⁴

In short, the feminist journals were vital to women's literary development in Ecuador because they created an atmosphere of female solidarity and unity in which women writers were able to overcome the doubts and fears which previously had discouraged many of them from publishing. Furthermore, in terms of content, besides having been a detailed testimony of women's major preoccupations during approximately four decades, the magazines were also an extremely important documentary of the way women saw themselves and their roles in society.

With regard to this chapter and its concern with the feminist journals as a source of women's literary development, it should be pointed out that the writers produced ten such publications (i.e., *La Mujer*, *El Hogar Cristiano*, *La Ondina del Guayas*, *La Mujer Ecuatoriana*, *Flora*, *Brisas del Carchi*, *Arlequín*, *Nuevos Horizontes*, *Iniciación*, *Alas*) during three periods: (1) the *alfarista* era, (2) 1917-1928, and (3) the 1930's. Thus, the following discussion will analyze the magazines from each period to illustrate the similarities and differences characteristic of Ecuadorian women's concerns through the years.⁵ Also, after offering a variety of general observations about the magazines' stated objectives and their relevance both to Ecuadorian feminism and women's development as prose writers, the chapter will conclude its study by commenting on the financial crises which eventually limited the journals' public exposure and growth.⁶

Early Feminist Magazines: The *Alfarista* Era (1895-1912)

La Mujer (Quito, 1905)

La Mujer, apparently, was the first feminist journal published, prepared in Quito in 1905 and subtitled: "Revista mensual de literatura y variedades."⁷ Each issue contained poetry, short stories, articles, and essays written by Ecuadorian women eager to express publicly their ideas and literary aspirations. Interestingly, the importance of *La Mujer* was immediately commented upon: "La aparición de la revista, la primera en su género que saldrá de las prensas de Quito, es realmente un acontecimiento transcendental."⁸

Recognizing the limited opportunities available for women to develop their abilities outside of the domestic sphere, the editors clearly explained their objectives:

Seramente preocupados del porvenir y el adelantamiento de la mujer ecuatoriana hemos venido acariciando, desde hace algún tiempo, la idea de fundar una Revista, como un medio para dar a conocer, el talento y las dotes de nuestras literatas, y abrir ancho campo a los ensayos de las que por modestia o timidez, no han dado hasta ahora a la publicidad sus labores intelectuales.

Muy poco ha mejorado entre nosotros la condición de la mujer, quizá porque educada en un rutinarismo fatal, rara vez ha osado levantar el vuelo por las vastísimas regiones de la inspiración y el estudio.⁹

Of course, at no time did *La Mujer* advocate destroying the traditional family:

No queremos decir con esto que la mujer deje de ser el ángel del hogar como madre y como esposa, no; pero sus atenciones creemos que no deben limitarse únicamente al estrecho círculo de la familia, dotada como está de inteligencia y exquisita sensibilidad que le hacen apta para contribuir con eficacia al mejoramiento social.¹⁰

Women, obviously, were aware of the dangers of antagonizing society and, consequently, emphasized consistently that their goals were harmonious with society's well-being and future progress. Nevertheless, many Ecuadorians criticized severely feminists' efforts, as evidenced by the following affirmation:

De Marzo [sic] para acá se han propuesto tres patriotas y entusiastas jóvenes editar un periódico mensual . . . *La Mujer*, en el cual no luzcan sino las aptitudes del bello sexo ecuatoriano. [Pero] . . . ¿qué podré decirte, . . . de la especie de trastorno, y aspaviento, y bulla levantados en nuestra sociedad por esta novedad? Acostumbrados como estamos a ver que nuestras pacíficas mujeres no han desempeñado nunca otro papel que el de cosa o adorno en el hogar, tal atrevimiento ha caído para ciertas y ciertos, en particular, como si de improviso hubiera aparecido el sol por el occidente.¹¹

The principal editor and voice of this magazine was Zoila Ugarte de Landívar, one of Ecuador's leading female intellectuals during the twentieth century who began writing for newspapers in 1890 (*El Tesoro del Hogar*); from 1906 to 1912 she supported ardently political liberalism in *La Prensa* and *La Patria*, signing articles with her pen name, Zarelia. According to Mary Corylé, another prestigious Ecuadorian intellectual and writer, Zoila Ugarte's life

se eleva enhiesta y luminosa hacia dos motivos supremos: el Ideal y las Letras. . . . No sabemos cuál de ellas [sic] tenga primacia en el alma diáfana y tersa de esta Mujer. . . . De Doña Zoila Ugarte de Landívar repetimos con el Dr. Luis F. Cháves: "Un talento pujante como el suyo, el relato de la vida admirable de una mujer admirable, merece un estudio que nos la muestre en sus múltiples facetas de artista, de escritora, de periodista, de luchadora política, de educadora, de batalladora en la palestra de la acción femenina y de mujer de encantadora feminidad en el hogar y en los círculos sociales."¹²

La Mujer offered Ugarte the opportunity to present her feminist views and to publicly defend women's human rights. Education was a vital concern which she frequently emphasized, explaining that a woman's schooling was essential since men constantly depended upon her: "La ignorancia femenina es contraproducente para el hombre [sic] ¿de quien [sic] depende su bienestar desde que nace hasta que muere sino de la mujer?"¹³ However, because of their lack of education, she pointed out that women had been forced to be sex objects dedicated to satisfying men's carnal desires:

Si la mujer es frívola, casi tiene derecho a serlo, ¿no es eso lo que se exige de ella? ¿no se la vitupera si por acaso se atreve a pensar en algo serio? ¿Qué educación se la [sic] da? ¿Qué senda se la [sic] señala? ¿No está obligada como las hetairas griegas a cultivar gracias físicas, para agradar al hombre?

Este, por lo común, busca esas gracias pasajeras que marchita la vejez o las enfermedades: la pobre mujer lo sabe y hace de estas armas su poder, poder efímero, puesto que no se basa en las cualidades del alma que son las únicas duraderas.¹⁴

Feminism, according to Ugarte, was women's basic means of solving her problems and becoming self-sufficient:

El feminismo no es una doctrina caprichosa y sin objeto, es la voz de la mujer oprimida, que reclama aquello que le pertenece, y que si no hoy, mañana o cualquier día lo conseguirá, siendo por lo tanto inútil ponerle trabas.

La mujer ecuatoriana siguiendo el movimiento universal, sale de su letargo, protesta de su miseria y pide conocimientos que la hagan apta para ganarse la vida con independencia; pide escuelas, pide talleres, pide que los que tienen obligación de atenderla se preocupen de ella algo más que hasta aquí lo han hecho.¹⁵

As for society's belief that women had attained sufficient improvements during the *alfarista* period, she quickly reminded her readers that the so-called progress left much to be desired. In *La Mujer* she explained:

Se nos observará que al presente goza de ventajas que no ha tenido nunca; cierto es, pero estas ventajas podrían contarse en los dedos y no tienen el fin práctico que ambicionamos. Se la emplea en las oficinas de correos, pero todos sabemos que el personal de dichas oficinas no lo componen muchas; se ha abierto también un curso de farmacia, y hay la esperanza de que dentro de algunos años obtendrán títulos las que se han dedicado a ese estudio; pero sería de desear que se las facilite además, otras profesiones, pues si llega a haber farmacéuticas, como abogados, médicos y sacerdotes, serán estrechas las boticas para contenerlas.¹⁶

By and large, the feminist themes presented by Zoila Ugarte reflected the general content found in *La Mujer*, as seen in the articles written by Josefina Veintemilla, Isabel D. de Espinel, Dolores Cabrera Egas, and Dolores Flor. In short, *La Mujer* continuously urged women to recognize their intellectual potential, and stressed the need for them to actively complement men's efforts in developing society:

La génesis mitológica de algunos pueblos ha pretendido dar a la mujer un origen inferior al del hombre; pero lo ha pretendido en vano, porque al dotarla de inteligencia el mismo Ser que la formó, quizo [sic] hacer de ella su igual, su compañera. Por eso cuando la mujer cometió su primera culpa Dios permitió que el hombre cometiera su primer pecado; . . .

En efecto, el hombre y la mujer son dos partes igualmente importantes, igualmente necesarias, para la formación de ese ser social fundador de la familia y de la raza.¹⁷

Apart from these consciousness raising-type articles, *La Mujer* also published numerous short stories written by Mercedes González de Moscoso, María Natalia Vaca, Josefina Veintemilla, and Antonia Mosquera A. Generally speaking, these compositions were sentimental love stories concerned only with entertaining the reader. Josefina Veintemilla's "Rita la loca,"¹⁸ for example, narrates the tragedy of a young bride who went mad after learning her husband had been killed at war. One night, during a full moon, she jumped into a lake believing her husband had been calling to her, and consequently, drowned. The story ends with the explanation that with each full moon, the two dead lovers have a rendezvous in the very same lake. Obviously, this sort of narrative offers very little in the way of ideological or aesthetic innovation. On the contrary, it reveals the considerable influence of late romanticism characteristic of Ecuador's literature at the turn of the century.

Perhaps the most interesting story published in this journal was "Los zapatos de boda," a feminist allegory written by Mercedes González de Moscoso. The story's protagonist, Grimesa, was a wealthy girl being pressured by her parents to marry since she was of age and expected to fulfill her obligations as a woman. However, Grimesa was a very special kind of woman, one not representative of society's traditional

feminine stereotype. That is to say, in spite of her wealth, she was ugly, of simple and modest tastes, highly cultured, and extremely astute. As González de Moscoso explained, Grimesa "no usaba sino sencillos vestidos de percal, siendo sus joyas las hermosas flores que brotaban bajo su cuidado en el extenso jardín de la casa de sus padres."¹⁹ With regard to her interests in art, music, and literature, "Grimesa pasaba la mayor parte del día entregada a lecturas serias que a la par que deleitaban su espíritu, robustecían su inteligencia poderosa."²⁰

In short, Grimesa was the feminist prototype many women intellectuals were hoping to form by means of much of their journalistic activity in Ecuador. The moral of the story was women will find happiness only when they abandon their frivolous ways, and begin to control their own destinies with their intelligence and good sense.

El Hogar Cristiano (Guayaquil, 1906-1919)

The second monthly journal found during the *alfarista* period was *El Hogar Cristiano*, directed by Angela Carbo de Maldonado and "las Señoras de la 'Asociación de la Prensa Católica' de Guayaquil."²¹ Unlike *La Mujer*, *El Hogar Cristiano* was not a literary review, but rather a religious magazine concerned with teaching women, in general, and mothers, in particular, their moral responsibilities as nuclei of the family. In general, the journal's religious concerns and strong church ties were clearly reflected in the large number of articles and poems dedicated to such themes as: the life of Jesus, the importance of catechism, the dangers of atheism, the need to strengthen marriage, and the teachings of numerous saints.

Whereas *La Mujer*, and other feminists journals to be studied in this Chapter, were directed by liberal women who supported Alfaro and his lay reforms, *El Hogar Cristiano* was conscious of its mission to defend many of the traditional institutions against such secular trends as legal separation, public education, and in general, against the period's anticlericalism. With respect to feminism, the conservative females feared women would misconstrue their new freedoms and opportunities and become libertines, a reaction strongly influenced by events in Europe:

Utópicas y engañadoras teorías de un mal entendido y peor comprendido feminismo, que jamás la podrá enaltecer ni honrar, ha invadido desgraciadamente muchos cerebros y sino [sic] basta echar una mirada hacia Inglaterra, donde un considerable número de mujeres, queriendo usurpar derechos incompatibles con su sexo y condición, emprenden una campaña violentísima, que llama la atención del mundo entero; forman escándalos, atacan y rompen los vidrios de los Ministerios; incendian los teatros de Dublín; . . . y otras mil barbaridades, . . .

No se diga jamás a una mujer, que su puesto está en los comicios populares.

Desde el hogar puede triunfar: he ahí su lugar; he ahí su santuario.

.
No se pretenda pues, inculcar en el corazón de nuestras mujeres, esas engañadoras y perjudiciales ideas.²²

La Ondina del Guayas (Guayaquil, 1907-1910)

The third magazine in this initial period of modern Ecuadorian women's prose activity was *La Ondina del Guayas*, a monthly literary review subtitled "Revista femenil mensual de literatura y variedades," directed by Rosaura Emelia Galarza, Teresa Alavedra Tama, and Celina María Galarza.²³ Each issue contained poetry and articles written by women, feature articles about Ecuadorian heroines and leading female intellectuals (i.e., Dolores Veintemilla de Galindo, Zoila Ugarte de Landívar, and Manuela Cañizares), and suggestions about feminine

fashions in dress and cosmetics. The journal's commitment to promoting female literary activity becomes evident upon reading the editorial statement published in the first issue, in 1907:

Sin pretensiones literarias . . . hemos emprendido en esta publicación por solo [sic] el deseo vehemente de que la mujer ecuatoriana tenga en ella uno como interprete de los bellos y tiernos sentimientos que se anidan en su alma. La mujer, en nuestra Patria, siempre se ha distinguido por su privilegiada inteligencia y su afición a las letras, pero las preocupaciones de la época, o la excesiva timidez de su carácter, le han impedido, con frecuencia [sic], hacer conocer al público las delicadas flores de su ingenio, resultando de aquí que hay verdaderas joyas literarias desconocidas casi de nuestra ilustrada sociedad. . . . *La Ondina del Guayas* es, pues, la revista del bello sexo: sus columnas de honor están a la absoluta disposición de las ilustres damas que, con tanto lucimiento manejan la pluma entre nosotros.²⁴

However, despite efforts to foment literary production among women, and attempts to inspire women to take advantage of their own capabilities, *La Ondina del Guayas* never sought to change significantly existing social roles:

Somos las mujeres, con raras excepciones, débiles por naturaleza y sentimentales por instinto. Sin ser feministas en la extensión que hoy se da a esta palabra, sí nos gusta que el bello sexo ilustre su entendimiento y levante su carácter; pero sin apartar jamás la vista del hogar, el cual debe ser en todo caso el centro de sus aspiraciones e ideales. . . . Escriba para el hogar y por el hogar. . . . Dejemos la árida y estéril política para el sexo fuerte. Nuestra femenina inteligencia no quiere ni debe penetrar esos misterios. Sensibles y sentimentales como somos las mujeres, nuestra imaginación debe inspirarse solo [sic] en las purísimas e inagotables fuentes de la virtud, de la belleza y del amor.²⁵

In effect, the journal's conscious policy of defining feminism in terms of acquiring better female education, but without disrupting traditional family structures (just as in the case of *La Mujer*), sounds very much like the conservative view expounded in *El Hogar Cristiano*:

El hogar le impone una misión más noble, más augusta, más digna, como hija, esposa o madre y si se quiere en la evolución actual, que el adelanto de la mujer, marque otro rumbo para la marcha rápida del progreso humano, que sea en buena hora. Que se le señale un camino más amplio, más seguro, para que escale desde el hogar hasta donde le sea posible, los tabernáculos del saber, porque una mujer de pluma, una mujer artista, que manteniendo su alma buena y su corazón sensible, tremola muy en alto el pendón del saber y de la ciencia,--la luz de la idea, reflejada en la gracia femenina . . . es un espectáculo muy hermoso digno de figurar en el concierto de la civilización y del progreso.²⁶

Consequently, the only significant difference between the three journals was that *La Mujer* and *La Ondina del Guayas* encouraged women to actively collaborate and develop their literary skills, while *El Hogar Cristiano* was a purely didactic review concerned only with religious doctrine and moral edification.

Another interesting feature common to these early journals was the absence of material relevant to contemporary political events, i.e., boundary disputes with Colombia and Peru, and the power struggles between Ecuador's liberal factions. According to Pareja Diezcanseco: "Duelen estas páginas de nuestra historia: están llenas de sangre, de vergüenza, de humillación."²⁷ Yet, women intellectuals only concerned themselves with their immediate feminist preoccupations, and appear to have been disinterested in those important events which supposedly pertained to men's dominion.²⁸ This silence probably indicates women still did not consider themselves a significant force in Ecuadorian politics, and consequently, preferred to go about their own business while men took charge of national issues.

Major Feminist Journals Published During the
Years 1917-1928

Flora (Quito, 1917-1920)

Between 1917 and 1928 the most important feminist journal was *Flora*, published in Quito and subtitled "Revista feminil ilustrada de literatura, artes y variedades."²⁹ Since Rosaura Emelia Galarza and Celina María Galarza, the editors of *La Ondina del Guayas*, also directed *Flora*, it is not surprising to find many similarities between the latter and the *alfarista* publications. As in the past, each issue contained poetry, photographs of distinguished Ecuadorian women, feature articles about leading female figures, advice about fashions, and in general, while the review's chief objective was to serve women's intellectual interests, at no time was it suggested they seek fulfillment by renouncing their domestic and maternal obligations.

Nevertheless, there were certain features which indicate *Flora* attempted to broaden its range of concerns so as not to limit its focus solely to women's immediate problems. The editors, for example, besides including in each issue special articles about particular cities or provinces, and briefly studying famous Ecuadorian poets and writers (i.e., Remigio Crespo Toral, González Suárez, Luis A. Martínez), at one point demonstrated a growing interest in Ecuador's social problems:

Por eso seguimos con empeño las labores de la Legislatura actualmente reunida; porque tiene que resolver el problema terrible de la subsistencia de las clases menesterosas, dar incremento a la instrucción pública, asegurar la marcha de los establecimientos de beneficencia y hacer inalterable la paz; porque un pueblo pobre y débil, la necesita para su desarrollo, para los progresos legítimos, para no perecer cuando tiene apenas vigor para los primeros pasos.³⁰

In effect, Rosaura and Celina Galarza recognized the need for women to be better informed about the world in which they lived, and explained in the first issue of *Flora*:

Hace algún tiempo, siguiendo los impulsos generosos de la juventud, fundamos *La Ondina del Guayas*, periódico literario de la mujer; . . .

Hoy el propósito es más grande que el de cultivar las flores de la literatura: ante el avance prodigioso que ha tomado la mujer en todas partes, no puede la ecuatoriana permanecer inerte, viendo las cosas sin seguir su corriente, dejando pasar los acontecimientos sin asirse a ellos para conseguir los bienes nuevos, y ensanchar su esfera de acción.

La guerra europea ha sido varilla mágica que ha llamado a la mujer a todos los terrenos, a todas las faenas; y ella, bajo muchos respectos, no sólo ha reemplazado a los hombres, sino que los ha sobrepujado; y lo que importa es que no viva de parásita, que no se crea impotente para ganarse la vida, que deje de ser eterna pupila. Que sea compañera, pero inteligente, libre, cariñosa; que ayude al hombre en lo más que puede, y que vea su porvenir no sólo circunscrito al matrimonio o al claustro.³¹

Of course, one must not be misled by the vigorous tone of the above affirmation which urged Ecuadorian women to cease living as parasites, and to plan their future in terms that went beyond marriage or the convent. Apparently, the editors, carried away with their own rhetoric, contradicted themselves in the same article: "Queremos a la mujer ante todo en el hogar, pues para esto la formó la naturaleza; pero para embellecer y perfeccionar ese mismo hogar, le es preciso estudiar los nobles ejemplos, criar aspiraciones, y ensanchar el ideal de las hijas, de las esposas y de las madres."³² Further on, they continued their opening statement by commenting, "*Flora* es, pues, vocero de la mujer ecuatoriana, no sólo para sus pensamientos bellos, sino para toda idea que tienda a su mejoramiento en todo terreno. La mujer es el amor, tiene necesidad de mantenerlo con la belleza y el encanto; es el ser más considerado

en la sociedad, le es preciso hacerse, por sólida educación, merecedora de ese sentimiento; . . . Para ser buena esposa, buena madre, tiene que ser instruída, prudente, severa y adorable siempre."³³

Hence, once again, education was considered vital, but only as a means of preparing women to be good mothers and homemakers. On the one hand, *Flora's* directors talked about representing Ecuadorian women in their quest for "mejoramiento en todo terreno;" and on the other hand, they limited women's aspirations to a very traditional framework which perhaps tended to negate *Flora's* supposed goals of attaining women's independence and self-sufficiency. In short, it is apparent Ecuadorian feminists did not define their needs in the same way as their counterparts in Europe or the United States: "Ni sugragistas, ni políticas, sólo mujeres en su derecho; es decir, instruídas, laboriosas, dignas del amor, la familia y la sociedad; aptas para sus múltiples deberes, hermanando siempre las gracias, la belleza y la virtud: he aquí el campo de acción a que aspiramos conducirla, y del cual es órgano esta modestísima publicación."³⁴

La Mujer Ecuatoriana (Guayaquil, 1918-1923)

La Mujer Ecuatoriana, published in Guayaquil and edited by Clara Aurora de Freire, Dolores S. Pacheco G., Rosa Angélica Peña, and Rosa Isabel Nieto, was the monthly journal of the Centro Feminista La Aurora, founded by Augustín A. Freire. The format and objectives were similar to those of the previously mentioned magazines. Of particular interest is an anonymous composition which plainly revealed the bitterness felt by many Ecuadorian women conscious of social injustices and inequities:

¿Por qué nació mujer? He ahí la causa de tanta esclavitud. El hombre se forma en el mundo su cielo o su infierno; pero no pasa lo que nosotras: nos tienen preparado un limbo para cuanta sea la duración de la tristísima, inútil vida. A la mujer no [sic] siquiera se le reservan grandes luchas, éxitos o derrotas de magna escala; para ella todo, hasta el dolor es mezquino; se desliza sin ruido y acaba sin gloria, sacrifíquese o no, de antemano está sacrificada . . . a la inacción, la rutina, "el que [sic] dirán," en una palabra a la más ruin desgracia. ¿Pesimismo? No: realidad.³⁵

Brisas del Carchi (Tulcán, 1919-1921)

Brisas del Carchi, a literary review from Tulcán, was not a feminist journal, but rather a monthly review whose editor was a woman, Mercedes Martínez Acosta. Despite its inclusion by Zoila María Castro in her list of feminist magazines ("Presencia femenina en la literatura ecuatoriana"), its pages contain no material to support such a classification. It was simply a regional journal published chiefly for the *carchenses*: "Pone sus columnas a disposición de las personas que quieren honrarle con sus colaboraciones, y publicará, de una manera especial, las producciones de los carchenses que se encuentren dentro o fuera del país."³⁶

Arlequín (Quito, 1928)

Arlequín, directed by Rosa Sáa de Yépez in Quito, was similar to *Brisas del Carchi* in its lack of interest in women's concerns. The magazine offered a variety of articles on literature and the plastic arts, and in terms of this study, its chief importance (as in the case of *Brisas del Carchi*) lies in its female editorship.

In short, during this second period of women's journalistic activity, female intellectuals continued campaigning for better education

and more opportunities in literature for women. *Flora*, despite its obvious limitations, represented an attempt to expose women to a more general corpus of knowledge and information by moving away slightly from purely feminist themes. With regard to *Brisas del Carchi* and *Arlequín*, these reviews may very well reflect an important step forward in Ecuadorian women's intellectual development, particularly since they seem to suggest that some women were gradually being accepted in positions of authority outside of solely female undertakings.³⁷

Feminist Magazine Literature and the 1930's

Turning to the 1930's, women writers in Ecuador continued using magazines as their principal means of literary expression, and as a basic instrument in reaching large sectors of the female population. Aside from championing feminist issues, writers began paying more attention to the longstanding social problems men were incapable of resolving. Economically, Ecuador suffered greatly from the effects of the Depression: "En 1930, la crisis mundial deflacionista llegó a nuestras puertas. Cayeron los precios. Se acabó, como por encanto, el ensueño del dinero por el dinero. Ninguna cosa valía nada."³⁸ Politically, Ecuador still could not find the long-sought after formula needed to stabilize conditions. In effect, during this period women writers recognized men's failures, and therefore, implored their readers to vigorously assume greater responsibilities in society.

Nuevos Horizontes (Guayaquil, 1933-1937)

Nuevos Horizontes, published in Guayaquil for four years,³⁹ clearly reflected the new directions adopted by women writers and intellectuals

in their efforts to secure a more meaningful place for females in Ecuadorian society. This journal was the official voice of the Legión Femenina de Educación Popular, a social organization committed to improving human conditions: "La Legión Femenina de Educación Popular tiene por objeto combatir al analfabetismo, proteger al niño y estimular la cultura nacional por todos los medios que se hallen al alcance de la mujer."⁴⁰ Both the organization and *Nuevos Horizontes* were directed to Rosa Borja de Icaza and her staff members, María Barredo de Castillo, Amarilis Fuentes, and María Esther Martínez M.

Rosa Borja de Icaza was one of Ecuador's key feminists who enjoyed international prestige in literary and social circles, and brought to Ecuadorian literature her universal, humanistic outlook. The recipient of numerous national and international honors (i.e., Member of the Academia Ecuatoriana de la Lengua, Directora de la Biblioteca Municipal de Guayaquil, Directora del Centro de Estudios Literarios de la Universidad de Guayaquil, Presidenta de Honor de la Sociedad Bolivariana de Guayaquil, Vocal Fundadora de la Sociedad de Beneficencia Ajuar del Niño, Presidenta del Consejo Nacional de la Unión de Mujeres Americanas, and ex-Consejera Provincial), she has been described as a woman who "logró atraer hacia el Ecuador la atención de los círculos literarios de toda América e, incluso, de Europa. Tan vasta y apreciada es la obra realizada por la Señora Rosa Borja de Icaza que . . . ha trascendido las fronteras de su país y es así que, en Chile, existe una Biblioteca Infantil que lleva su nombre como expresión de reconocimiento por su encumbrada contribución a la cultura de Ecuador y de América."⁴¹ It should not be surprising, then, that *Nuevos Horizontes* was characterized by a broad range of concerns which

included literacy campaigns, special legislation to protect women and juvenile workers, female education, Pan Americanism, and world peace.

Each issue of *Nuevos Horizontes* contained, basically, six sections: (1) short stories and poetry by Ecuadorian women and foreigners; (2) articles on feminism; (3) social problems; (4) education; (5) articles on foreign women; (6) letters to the editor (often from foreign women leaders expressing solidarity with the editor and the aims of the magazine). Perhaps the most striking feature of Borja during her editorship of *Nuevos Horizontes* was her close association with other Latin American women leaders, and frequently, with their feminist magazines. From the very first issue, she demonstrated her Pan Americanism by publishing a letter she had written previously to Chile's Isabel Morel, editor of *Nosotras*: "Interesada como vivo en las conquistas del feminismo en el mundo, he leído con toda atención . . . *Nosotras*, y desde el primer instante he querido comunicarme con Ud. para laborar en armonía por la cultura y elevación de la mujer en el Continente."⁴² Similar references to other women leaders, and numerous literary and journalistic contributions sent by foreign women to *Nuevos Horizontes* filled the journal's six sections: Victoria Ocampo, editor of *Sur* (Buenos Aires); Nelly Merino Carvallo, editor of *Mujeres de América* (Buenos Aires); Zulma Núñez, editor of *América Nueva* (Uruguay); Pilar Laña Santillana, editor of *Social* (Lima); Gloria Dall, Presidenta de la Federación Nacional de Empleadas de Bogotá; and Abigail Mejía de Fernández, Directora del Museo Nacional de Santo Domingo were some examples of this intercontinental collaboration women's groups of this period succeeded in establishing.

In effect, the solidarity which existed among women writers and intellectuals throughout America has highlighted as an unprecedented achievement in a world marred by political conflicts and economic crises. Women were proving to society, and to themselves, that they were capable of resolving many of the problems created by men:

En medio del desenfreno de las pasiones de los hombres, entre la lucha contradictoria del hambre y la guerra que aniquilan la vida política y económica de los pueblos, se levantará el emocionado clamor de la mujer, defendiendo con decisión histórica la corriente sagrada de la existencia humana, quizás por representar el sentido más íntimo de ella, por sobre los primitivos procedimientos de la fuerza sangrienta y la abominable política del dinero.

La mujer cerebro, la mujer corazón, la mujer pensante de estos días, liberada y de viejas tradiciones exclusivistas, pero conservando siempre un espíritu cristiano, puede con sus enormes fuerzas vitales, destruir todas las contradicciones sociales que obstaculizan el camino para orientar una sociedad menos egoísta, mezcla de avanzada y primitiva.

Negros nubarrones en medio de la incertidumbre, amenazan devastar América, pero la unidad espiritual de las mujeres no permitirá en ningún tiempo que ellos engendren una tempestad.⁴³

Since female leaders in Ecuador were convinced women had the potential to participate significantly in society, they continued to focus on the feminist themes which urged all women to reject traditional servile roles and become more involved in national development. Carmen de Burgos, in an article entitled "Misión suprema," explained:

La mujer, por pasividad, por bobaliconería, por respeto a una tradición que la hace sumisa, se doblaba servilmente y cree que su misión es la de obedecer, la de aplaudir, la de aceptarlo todo en una estúpida molición; sin raciocinio ni voluntad, como si su papel en el mundo fuese el de las comparsas o la clac que ayuda al éxito de la comedia. . . .

Ella ha de pensar, no en acrecentar su belleza, sino en acrecentar su interés de un modo que siendo común a todas sea personalísimo en cada una.

De este modo, la mujer no será una cosa inconsistente, y hasta poco real, sino algo muy firme, completador, que compensaría al hombre entendiéndole, silencio, ahogado,⁴⁴ sin esa falta de fantasía con que convive ahora con él.

It is clear, of course, Ecuadorian feminists still insisted on the need to complement men's efforts, and to play a supporting role which allowed men to maintain their authoritative position over women. María Esther Martínez M., for example, in her "El problema feminista en el Ecuador," emphasized the need for women to organize and join together to "evitar la disgregación y el aislamiento de sus componentes que necesariamente llevan al fracaso; no por falta de capacidad, sino por falta de dirección."⁴⁵ Moreover, she urged the government to establish labor unions for women workers and Asociaciones de Empleadas which would concentrate on defending exclusively women's rights, as opposed to mixed groups which normally fought for "la solución de muchos problemas concernientes al elemento masculino, que se encuentra en mayoría."⁴⁶ Also, the article stressed the need for female representation in government, as well as equal salaries for women. Nevertheless, despite these liberal proposals, Martínez too felt it essential to assure her readers feminism was no threat to men:

No planteo el problema desde el punto de vista de un feminismo egoísta, del predominio absoluto de la mujer con pretensiones al desplazamiento del hombre, . . . No, proclamo en primer lugar, una situación, para la mujer, más de acuerdo con su ser inteligente: el derecho a su desenvolvimiento científico y cultural, pero dentro de una organización social viciada por su conformación económica, dentro de la cual se ha hecho imprescindible la presencia de la mujer hasta en las fábricas y destinada a las labores más rudas para asegurar su derecho a la vida, . . .⁴⁷

Referring to the meaning and problems of Ecuadorian feminism, as expounded by many women writers, Delia Ibarra de Dueñas wrote:

El feminismo en el Ecuador está en pañales, . . . Nos asusta la palabra como algo insólito, algo anormal, algo que nos inspira temores y recelos. Y es que del Feminismo tenemos la idea más peregrina. Creemos que

consiste principalmente en que la mujer haga alardes de maneras bruscas; que fume, que juegue el bridge, que tenga modales hombrunos, . . . Creemos que Feminismo es símbolo de revolución de trastorno, así como comunismo, como bolchevismo, y naturalmente hacemos un movimiento como de tortuga, que ante algo inusitado se esconde bajo su concha. En verdad, es una concha impenetrable ese tejido de prejuicios, lógico resultado de nuestra educación y de nuestras costumbres impregnadas aún de las modalidades coloniales. Concha fuerte y resistente formada por un acumulo de ideas y de prácticas por las que la mujer en nuestra sociedad ha vivido cohibida, restringida en sus funciones, sin más perspectiva que el matrimonio o el convento, y sin más aspiración que ser parásita del hombre.⁴⁸

However, she concluded:

El principio filosófico del Feminismo trata de alcanzar para la mujer un nivel moral, político y social *equivalente* al del hombre, no superior ni enteramente igual; ya que no es superior ni enteramente igual a la de aquél, la función que debe desempeñar en el mundo. Entre los dos, hombre y mujer se armonizan, se completan, cada uno en su esfera igualmente trascendental, por resultado de la admirable armonía que Dios ha puesto en todas sus obras.⁴⁹

To summarize, *Nuevos Horizontes* served several purposes. On a superficial level, it reported the many activities realized by the Legión Femenina de Educación Popular, i.e., creation of people's libraries, courses for nurses, and free schools for women workers. Apart from this social concern, the journal was a vital instrument in establishing contacts between Ecuadorian women and other Latin American feminist leaders who were attempting to provide a more equitable social role for larger numbers of women throughout the continent. Above all, however, *Nuevos Horizontes* gave women the opportunity to write. Since male perspectives were understood to have been formed by specific circumstances exclusive to men, many Ecuadorian women realized it was essential they themselves publicly interpret their unique experiences. Hence, they accepted the challenge to speak out for all women and reveal the way to new horizons. ✓

Iniciación (Ambato, 1934-1935)

Another feminist journal of the period was *Iniciación*, published in Ambato and subtitled "Revista femenil de cultura."⁵⁰ Blanca Martínez de Tinajero, a novelist who will be studied in a subsequent chapter, and Abigail Naranjo Fernández edited this review which, although lacking the Pan Americanist vision of *Nuevos Horizontes*, shared many of the latter's objectives and concerns:

Nuevas Ariadnas, enamoradas de un Ideal, la cultura de la mujer, queremos ofrendar a este Ideal, nuestros desvelos y nuestro entusiasmo, y así laborar por el feminismo por esta doctrina justa y lógica, que a la mujer la nivela al hombre, sin menoscabar los derechos de éste; doctrina que producirá innegables beneficios para la mujer, pero que no lo serán menores para el hombre, ya que en la mujer preparada encontrará: la sincera consejera, la eficaz colaboradora, y en muchas ocasiones la iniciadora de todo lo que signifique progreso.⁵¹

Generally speaking, *Iniciación* presented articles about women's participation in the Tungurahua region's Red Cross; the important role played by mothers in children's education; advice about homemaking; short stories and poetry written by women and men; evocations of Nature and its feminine qualities (i.e., creation); and passages cited from such writers as Juan Montalvo, Juan León Mera, Rubén Darío, and Luis A. Martínez. The most significant element found in this journal, however, was its sponsorship of a literary contest for women, an indication that the editors were trying to go beyond past efforts in stimulating aspiring female writers. Besides offering women the opportunity to write for *Iniciación*, they were set on discovering much of the talent that previously had gone unnoticed.⁵² Naturally, this can be considered another facet of Ecuadorian women's commitment to helping one another

in their quest for progress and improvement: "Mucho tenemos que estudiar, comenzando por definirnos y conocernos nosotras mismas, para llegar a una autonomía y emancipación completas. . . . Si queremos mejorar el mundo, mejoremos primero a la mujer."⁵³

Alas (Quito, 1934)

The last magazine to be discussed was published in 1934, when several women who had been directly involved in various feminist journals through the years joined together in Quito. Zoila Ugarte de Landívar, Victoria Vásconez Cuví, María Angélica Idrobo, and Rosaura Emilia Galarza succeeded in publishing two issues of *Alas*, a publication dedicated to all Spanish-speaking women: "Mujeres ecuatorianas, mujeres indoibéricas, para vosotras y por vosotras se ha fundado especialmente esta Revista. Acudid a embellecerla con las producciones de vuestro ingenio y de vuestro sentimiento, con el incontestable vigor de vuestra delicada resistencia, que es la fuerza y la vida del mundo."⁵⁴ In general, *Alas* was a continuation of earlier feminist journals in Ecuador, and hence, did not offer any significant innovations.⁵⁵

Notwithstanding women's journalistic and literary activity described above, it should be borne in mind that in terms of distribution and publication, all of the feminist magazines suffered from serious limitations. Indeed, because of financial difficulties, the journals rarely circulated outside of the cities where they were printed, and consequently, few Ecuadorians learned of their existence.

Also, very few magazines were able to produce enough issues to establish a stable following.⁵⁶ According to Angel Rojas, economic problems stifled most publications in Ecuador, and not just those produced by women:

Infortunada característica de nuestras publicaciones ha sido y sigue siendo lo precario de su vida. Hecho que proviene de que, hasta aquí, ninguna de ellas ha podido estabilizarse económicamente. Los grupos entusiastas que sostienen el gasto de los primeros números por lo general no están en condiciones de seguir sacrificándose indefinidamente. Y la publicación cesa. No se tiene entre nosotros por costumbre adquirir revistas nacionales. Se las lee en las bibliotecas, o cuando se las distribuye gratuitamente . . . que es la única forma de hacerlas circular.⁵⁷

In the feminist magazines, there are numerous references to the financial problems confronted by the editors, and the impossibility of continuing operations. For example, *La Mujer* advised its readers of having requested economic support from the Legislature because the directors "temen que su constancia se estrellé en la falta de recursos para subvenir a los gastos que demanda la publicación."⁵⁸ In 1918, when Rosaura Emelia Galarza asked the Legislature for assistance, she published a short note in *Flora*, explaining: "Es la primera ocasión que la mujer ecuatoriana se lanza al palenque de las letras en órgano propio de publicación; y como sabéis bien que esta clase de revistas no pueden sostenerse por sí solas al principio, la súplica es motivada."⁵⁹ Unfortunately, *Flora* was not subsidized, and had to discontinue publication for more than one year. Galarza later explained:

Por este motivo, y en vista del elevadísimo precio que alcanzó el papel de imprenta en esos días, hubo necesidad de suspender indefinidamente la publicación de *Flora*, pues es muy sabido que, en el Ecuador, es casi imposible la existencia de un periódico literario durante sus primeros años, sin la protección oficial, máxime siendo aquél dirigido, redactado y ayudado únicamente por mujeres.⁶⁰

Hence, women writers who began their careers with the feminist journals not only had to struggle against traditional prejudices, but also against the lack of financial resources, a problem never really solved in Ecuador. Even if some magazines did not officially make known their economic plight, a quick glance at the irregularity in publication is enough to illustrate the hardships suffered by ambitious intellectuals. In effect, as Alejandro Andrade Coello pungently stated, when referring to the feminist journals: "Pero, al fin y al cabo son flores de un día"⁶¹

Despite these limitations, however, the feminist journals played a major role in promoting literary expression among women in Ecuador; for the first time in national literary history a significant number of women were being encouraged to write and publish. Also, besides appearing to be, in large part, an exercise in female consciousness raising, the journals succeeded in presenting vividly Ecuadorian women's understanding of themselves, and of their social realities. In short, this phase of women's prose development was part of an experimental period in which Ecuadorian women discovered their own talents and established a literary tradition which through the years has evolved

gradually, offering women experience and training essential to fully realizing their potential as prose writers.

Notes
Chapter III

¹For an extensive list of female intellectuals (mostly poetesses) in pre-twentieth century Ecuador, see: Zoila María Castro, "Presencia femenina en la literatura ecuatoriana," *Cuadernos del Guayas*, IV, 7 (December 1953), 14, 19.

²Rosa Borja de Icaza, *Hacia la vida* (Guayaquil: Biblioteca Municipal de Guayaquil, 1936). p. 88.

³Cited in Digna E. Ayón de Messner, *Trayectoria histórica y cultural de la Universidad de Guayaquil: 1867-1967*, 2nd ed. (Guayaquil: Departamento de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Guayaquil, 1967), p. 81.

⁴Isaac J. Barrera, *Historia de la literatura ecuatoriana*, p. 1184.

⁵Because much of the material is similar in content and purpose, the discussion will concentrate on one journal from each period, followed by brief comments on the remaining publications.

⁶Naturally, due to the lack of previous research, this study does not claim to be a definitive inventory of the feminist journals, many of which may have been lost during the years, or simply continue sitting on some library shelf waiting to be discovered. Nevertheless, this presentation is complete enough to offer a representative idea of the material. To date, the only sources found that mention names of magazines are: Zoila María Castro, "Presencia femenina en la literatura ecuatoriana;" Morayma Ofyr Carvajal, *Galería del espíritu: Mujeres de mi patria*; and Alejandro Andrade Coello, "Cultura femenina: Floración intelectual de la mujer ecuatoriana en el siglo XX." According to Zoila María Castro, *Nena* and *Argos* were part of women's journalistic publications; to date, they have not been located. One issue of a literary review from Portoviejo, entitled *Argos*, has been found; however, its editors were men and there are no apparent feminist concerns. Although three women did collaborate (Natividad Robles, América Castillo, and Bertha Cedeño de Espinel) with the magazine, it is assumed this journal is not the one Castro had in mind.

⁷Six issues have been located: 1, 1 (April 1905); 1, 2 (May 1905); 1, 3 (June 1905); 1, 4 (July 1905); 1, 5 (August 1905); 1, 6 (October 1905). Due to financial difficulties referred to in the August edition, a topic to be treated later in this chapter, it is unlikely other issues were published after October.

⁸Elisa, "Carta a Laura," *La Mujer*, 1, 1 (April 1905), 27.

⁹"Notas editoriales," *La Mujer*, 1, 1 (April 1905), 31.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹ Lucila Montalvo, "Carta íntima," *La Mujer*, I, 3 (June 1905), 78.

¹² "Tres mujeres máximas en la literatura nacional," *Anales de la Universidad de Cuenca*, VIII, 2 (April-June 1952), 158.

¹³ "Nuestro ideal," *La Mujer*, I, 1 (April 1905), 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁵ "Aspiraciones," *La Mujer*, I, 4 (July 1905), 100.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁷ Josefina Veintemilla, "La Mujer," *La Mujer*, I, 1 (April 1905), 8.

¹⁸ *La Mujer*, I, 4 (July 1905), 122-126. Other stories found in *La Mujer* are the following: Mercedes González de Moscoso, "Los zapatos de boda," *La Mujer*, I, 1 (April 1905), 4-6; María Natalia Vaca, "¡Pobre María!," *La Mujer*, I, 1 (April 1905), 19-23; continued in I, 2 (May 1905), 45-50; continued in I, 3 (June 1905), 83-87; Mercedes González de Moscoso, "Doble sacrificio," *La Mujer*, I, 3 (June 1905), 72-77; continued in I, 4 (July 1905), 105-110; María Natalia Vaca, "Cuento de Navidad," *La Mujer*, I, 5 (August 1905), 144-154; Antonia Mosquera A., "Sor Lorenza," *La Mujer*, I, 6 (October 1905), 169-172. This last story was incomplete and was to be continued in a later issue.

¹⁹ "Los zapatos de boda," p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ The only issues located were the complete collections of 1909 (III) and 1914 (VIII). Although there may be some question as to whether or not this journal is feminist, it must be borne in mind that the editors clearly presented their understanding of women's place in society. Moreover, despite its conservative position, *El Hogar Cristiano* attempted to make women conscious of their responsibilities.

²² Adelaida C. Velasco Galdós, "¿Feminismo?," *El Hogar Cristiano*, VIII, 81 (July 1914), 58.

²³ The following issues have been located: I, 1 (October 1907); III, 5 (July 1909); III, 6 (August 1909); IV, 7 (January 1910); IV, 8 (May 1910).

²⁴ "Nuestro ideal," *La Ondina del Guayas*, I, 1 (October 1907), 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁶ Adelaida Velasco, "¿Feminismo?," p. 58.

²⁷Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, *Historia de la república*, II, 39.

²⁸The only exception found was several references to the border dispute with Peru, published in *La Ondina del Guayas*, IV, 8 (May 1910). This issue used the boundary conflict as a point of departure in its discussion of past heroines who valiantly defended Ecuador in times of crisis. Basically, then, this issue appears to be more interested in convincing women of their own potential and illustrious past than the border question, per se.

²⁹Magazines of this period found were: *Flora*, I, 1 (September 1917); I, 2 (October 1917); I, 3 (November 1917); I, 4 (December 1917); I, 7 (May-June 1918); I, 8-9 (July-August 1918); I, 10-11 (September-October 1918); I, 12 (November-December 1918); II, 13-14 (August-September 1920); *La Mujer Ecuatoriana*, I, 1 (July 1918); I, 2 (August 1918); I, 3 (September 1918); I, 4 (October 1918); I, 5 (November 1918); I, 6 (January 1919); I, 7 (March 1919); I, 8 (May 1919); I, 9 (June 1919); II, 10 (August 1919); II, 11 (October 1919); II, 12-13 (November-December 1919); II, 14-15 (January-February 1920); II, 16-17 (March-April 1920); II, 18 (May 1920); II, 19-20 (June-July 1920); II, 21 (August 1920); II, 22 (February 1921); II, 23 (March 1921); II, 24 (May 1921); III, 25 (July 1921); III, 26 (August-September 1921); III, 27 (October-December 1921); III, 28 (March 1922); III, 29 (May 1922); III, 30 (June 1922); IV, 31 (July 1923); *Brisas del Carchi*, I, 3 (July 1919); I, 5-6 (September-October 1919); I, 7 (November 1919); I, 8 (December 1919); I, 9-10 (January-February 1920); I, 11 (March 1920); II, 12-13 (April-May 1920); II, 16-17 (August-September 1920); III, 20-21 (April-May 1921); III, 22-23 (June-July 1921); *Arlequín*, I, 2 (August 1928).

³⁰"Agosto sagrado," *Flora*, I, 8-9 (July-August 1918), 156.

³¹"Proemio," *Flora*, I, 1 (September 1917), 1. The article was signed, "La Dirección."

³²*Ibid.*

³³*Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵"Mi pesimismo: caso general," *La Mujer Ecuatoriana*, I, 5 (November 1918), 113.

³⁶This statement is found on the inside front cover of each issue.

³⁷Through the years there have been women directors of National and Municipal libraries (i.e., Zoila Ugarte de Landívar, Rosa Borja de Icaza, Blanca Martínez de Tinajero), heads of cultural organizations (i.e., the different branches of the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana and the Sociedad Bolivariana). Currently, *Nueva*, a monthly news magazine from Quito, is directed by Magdalena and Alejandra Adoum.

³⁸Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, *Historia de la república*, II, 91.

³⁹Although Serafín Domínguez Mancebo has stated that this magazine was published for four years ("Ecuador, su independencia y su cultura," *Cuadernos del Guayas*, IX, 17 (September 1958), 6), only the following issues have been located: I, 1 (October 1933); I, 2 (November 1933); I, 3 (December 1933); I, 4 (January 1934); I, 7 (April 1934); I, 8 (July 1934); I, 9 (July-August 1934); II, 12 (January-February 1935).

⁴⁰"Legión Femenina de Educación Popular," *Nuevos Horizontes*, I, 1 (October 1933), 26.

⁴¹Serafín Domínguez Mancebo, "Ecuador, su independencia y su cultura," p. 6.

⁴²["Carta a Isabel Morel,"] *Nuevos Horizontes*, I, 1 (October 1933), 6. The original letter published had no title.

⁴³"Editorial," *Nuevos Horizontes*, I, 3 (December 1933), 5.

⁴⁴*Nuevos Horizontes*, I, 1 (October 1933), 27.

⁴⁵*Nuevos Horizontes*, I, 2 (November 1933), 7.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 7, 24.

⁴⁸"Feminismo," *Nuevos Horizontes*, I, 8 (May-June 1934). The article was signed, "Cornelia." This was Delia Ibarra's pen name.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁰The following issues have been located: I, 1 (April 1934); I, 2 (May 1934); I, 4 (August 1934); I, 5 (September-October 1934); I, 6 (November 1934); I, 7-8 (February 1935).

⁵¹"La cultura femenina," *Iniciación*, I, 1 (April 1934), 3. This editorial most likely was written by Blanca Martínez.

⁵²This contest was announced ("Concurso literario de *Iniciación*") in I, 5 (September-October 1934). Unfortunately, no other pertinent information has been found to date.

⁵³Alicia Jaramillo R., "Iniciando," *Iniciación*, I, 1 (April 1934), 7.

⁵⁴"¿Se puede, Compañeras?," *Alas*, I, 1 (December 1934), 1. Only the first issue has been located.

⁵⁵Two later feminist publications should also be mentioned before concluding this chapter. *Fraternidad* (Guayaquil, 1947-1948) was edited by Esperanza Caputti O. and Laura Carrera G., in conjunction with Guayaquil's Centro Cultural Fraternidad, a group of women professors who published articles concerned with education, feminist themes, and some poetry. *Mujer* (Guayaquil, 1975), published by the Frente Unido de Mujeres del Guayas, was mainly concerned with informing women about the Frente's projects and goals for the Año Internacional de la Mujer, 1975 (two numbers were published as of June 1975: 1, 1 (January-March 1975); 1, 2 (April-June 1975)).

⁵⁶*El Hogar Cristiano* is an obvious exception.

⁵⁷*La novela ecuatoriana*, p. 94.

⁵⁸"Petición," *La Mujer*, 1, 5 (August 1905), 158.

⁵⁹This note appeared in *Flora*, 1, 8-9 (July-August 1918), 189.

⁶⁰This note appeared in *Flora*, 1, 13-14 (August-September 1920), 227. Additional evidence of the financial crisis was published in *Brisas del Carchi*, III, 22-23 (June-July 1921), 360:

"Y así, hoy al cesar temporalmente la publicación de *Brisas del Carchi*, no nos sentimos ni cansados ni vencidos; . . . solamente la crisis de papel que ha herido de muerte a muchas publicaciones, nos pone en el caso de suspender por poco tiempo nuestro pequeño trabajo periodístico."

⁶¹"Cultura femenina: Floración intelectual de la mujer ecuatoriana en el siglo XX," p. 321.

CHAPTER IV

THE ESSAY

Historically speaking, the literary growth and development of Ecuador's female prose writers have gone through three formative stages during this century.¹ The feminist journals presented in the previous chapter and numerous newspapers (i.e., *El Telégrafo*, *El Día*, *El Comercio*, *El Universo*) gave the initial impulse when, for the first time, they offered women easy access to a public medium in which they could write and speak out about specific issues. Although the short polemical article of the journals continued to be the dominant prose form through World War II, between 1922-1945 a second stage was begun when several writers demonstrated a strong desire to do more than occasionally contribute to periodicals. These women considered themselves writers whose specific role was to publish steadily their views and opinions about the problems of Ecuadorian society, and consequently, they dedicated most of their adult lives to writing. The third stage (post-World War II), unlike the earlier ones, can be characterized by its change in focus: much of the prose dealt with esthetic and artistic themes (i.e., music, art, literature) rather than the socio-political ones. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to evaluate the prose of the second and third stages in order to understand more clearly Ecuadorian women's evolution as prose writers.

Women Writers: 1922-1945

As women gained experience in writing and confidence in their abilities it was only natural for many of them to broaden the scope of their professional activities. Despite the traditional obstacles that have beset writers in Ecuador, Hipatia Cárdenas (1899-1972), Victoria Váscónez Cuví (1891-1939), Rosa Borja de Icaza (1889-1964), and Zoila Rendón (?-?) managed to publish numerous collections of essays and articles, showing that women, just as men, were capable of being committed writers.² Feminist related topics and socio-political questions were treated constantly by these writers whose works clearly reflected the female intellectual's thinking in Ecuador during a considerable portion of this century.

Feminism: The Theme of *Marianismo*

With regard to feminism, in the light of the 1975 Assembly in Mexico which commemorated International Women's Year, the diversity of women's interests and concerns has become obvious, particularly since women from different parts of the world define and interpret their realities in terms of their own cultures and traditions. For example, women from the United States may find it difficult to understand, but most Latin American women continue to accept role differentiation between the sexes as Jane Jaquette notes: "A whole generation of North American women have become convinced of their powerlessness relative to males and have moved to destroy the role differentiation they perceive as its cause. The Latin American woman correctly perceives role differentiation as the key to her power and influence. Even the notions of the 'separate-

ness' and 'mystery' of women, which are viewed in the North American context as male propaganda chiefly used to discriminate against women, are seen in the Latin American context as images to be enhanced, not destroyed."³ In effect, many Latin American women believe role differentiation and *machismo* are a source of power rather than powerlessness, for "the availability of strong female roles in Latin American culture is a sign of a vitality of the 'traditional' forms of role differentiation and that *machismo*, often thought by North Americans as the clearest evidence of the oppression and powerlessness of women in Latin America, is really a social convention in which women have an important stake, for male 'inmorality' is basic to female legitimacy and influence."⁴

Upon reading Cárdenas, Váscónez, Borja, and Rendón, the validity of Jaquette's interpretation is confirmed, at least insofar as Ecuador is concerned. These women spent a good deal of time writing about the Ecuadorian female experience, and although they sought greater opportunities for women in society, they continually emphasized the need to preserve traditional family roles (i.e., daughter, wife, and mother). Moreover, women were understood to be Ecuador's bearers of morality whose principal function in society was to counteract the evil ways of men. Váscónez explained in 1922: "La formación moral de la mujer es todavía más severa y exigente que la del hombre; ella, no podrá dar un paso adelante en la adquisición de sus derechos, sino [sic] se preocupa ante todo, de su formación moral."⁵

This insistence upon women's moral responsibilities in society has been referred to as *marianismo*, the female counterpart to *machismo*. According to Evelyn Stevens, *marianismo* "is just as prevalent as *machismo*

but it is less understood by Latin Americans themselves and almost unknown to foreigners. It is the cult of feminine spiritual superiority, which teaches that women are semidivine, morally superior to and spiritually stronger than men."⁶ After reading the prose written by Ecuadorian women prior to World War II (i.e., the feminist magazine material), and particularly the works published by the four writers of 1922-1945 mentioned above, it becomes clear *marianismo* was very much a part of the evolution of feminist thought in Ecuador. Although women intellectuals urged the authorities to improve female education, to offer women more professional opportunities in society, they never rejected the home as their center of activity and responsibility. In fact, women emphasized continually that more education and professional opportunities were desired because enlightened women would be better prepared than ignorant ones for motherhood.

In general, women's feminist/*marianista* concerns were based on two premises: women were to be moral citizens, and they were to be dedicated mothers. In terms of morality, Vásconez for example, likened the home to a religious temple in which women played a key role: "El hogar ennoblecido con las virtudes de innumerables y grandes santas, puede y debe ser para las mujeres un templo. En él pueden practicar cuanto [sic] ambicionen para su perfección moral."⁷ According to Borja, each woman was primarily "la guardiana de la moralidad social, y cuando desciende de su sitio y corrompe su corazón y sus costumbres, la sociedad se derrumba: por la relajación y la espantosa influencia que las mujeres con sus pasiones ejercieron en la sociedad de Claudio y de Nerón, vemos envilecido el pueblo, y como epílogo, la destrucción del Imperio Romano."⁸

In effect, women (mothers) were society's spiritual leaders charged with the noble mission of showing man the way to a better world. Borja explained: "El mundo corre a su fin en una decadencia moral desconcertante; en donde quiera que ponemos la vista se levanta el odio enmascarado con el doblez de la intriga, con la pequeñez de la envidia y con el azote cruel de la calumnia. . . . Tener valor moral [las mujeres] y transmitirlo a nuestros hijos, he ahí el mayor bien que podemos prodigarles."⁹

The close ties between feminism and *marianismo* become even more apparent when reading yet another comment written by Borja:

El feminismo, repito, debe batallar por la regeneración educativa de la mujer, para capacitarla también para la lucha por la vida, por el derecho de trabajar, con la capacidad que, por si solas sus aptitudes le conceden, llevándola a la independencia personal; pero nunca ese esfuerzo cultural ha de arrancarla del papel eminentemente espiritual que debe representar en la colectividad. Su puesto no está en las urnas para votar por una libertad de que es muy dueña por su elevado espíritu; su acción es mucho más amplia, más noble, más hermosa, porque tiene por escenario el mundo y como centro el corazón del hombre.¹⁰

Interestingly enough, Ecuadorian women wrote extensively about the negative effects numerous social reforms and foreign female influences had on women's morality. During the 1920's there was an awareness in Ecuador that attitudes and customs had changed throughout the world, and in Ecuador itself ladies' hem lines were higher while necklines were lower, heavier make-up was used, women were smoking in public, they were even dancing the fox trot with strangers. Not surprisingly, the new woman who had little in common with the traditional archetype, the Virgin Mother, was criticized severely by Ecuador's *marianista* writers:

"La mujer contemporánea posee muchos conocimientos, pero no pesa los graves y complicados problemas y deberes como esposa y como madre. Podríamos decir que se halla educada a la perfección para el coquetismo, el lujo, el sport, los cines, los bailes, el juego, consistiendo su ambición más grande en aparecer siempre bonita y a la moderna."¹¹

In addition, Rendón wrote that the uneducated woman of the past was in many cases superior to the more enlightened one of contemporary times:

Quitando las diferencias de educación y el extremo de ignorancia que daban a la niña en los hogares de antaño, pero, qué virtudes respiraban [sic]. Ante todo se le enseñaba a ser buena, formando su corazón en la dignidad propia de mujer, y si en verdad se le ocultaba el amor mal entendido, se le guiaba, en cambio, por el camino del pudor; . . . No se le enseñaba a leer, peor escribir, pero sí a ser mujer completa en sus quehaceres domésticos; era hábil en las artes de coser, cocinar, planchar, bordar y economizar, siendo los hijos de nuestros antecesores, buenos, respetuosos, educados por aquellas mujeres que en nada se parecían a las modernas.¹²

In effect, Ecuadorian feminists did not seek greater educational and professional opportunities to abandon their traditional roles, but rather to reinforce them: "Si somos libres para estudiar, que nuestros conocimientos sirvan para aumentar los encantos en el hogar, para ilustrar y preparar a nuestras hijas, y no para contribuir a que sean semi-hombres, destruyendo sus sentimientos naturales y convirtiéndolas en seres inútiles para la familia y para la sociedad."¹³ Clearly, many Ecuadorian women believed their moral example was essential in a world marred by war, hunger, and injustice, and therefore, they frowned upon the frivolous ways of their contemporaries who were abusing newly acquired freedoms:

La silueta de la mujer moderna, frívola y vacía, se perfila cada vez más intensa y amenazante en el mundo y esta tendencia, este resumen de extravío social, es el que en este instante histórico de la humanidad a todos nos preocupa, porque a todos igualmente nos hiere. El fox-trot, la falda corta, la pintura en el rostro, el cine y la novela, son los factores deslumbrantes que, como una bujía incandescente atrae a las mariposas incautas, hoy arrastran lo mismo a la señorita encumbrada, como a la niña modesta que vive en los talleres. ¡Triste situación la de la humanidad! ella [sic] se pasiona fácilmente de lo que brilla, de lo que reluce, y es difícil que se detenga a contemplar el fondo mismo de las cosas; pero esta falta de comprensión, este absoluto extravío moral hoy se determina con caracteres alarmantes y la mujer moderna con sus falsas ideas tiende a desequilibrar totalmente la armonía social.⁴

Consistent with Ecuadorian feminists' desire to participate significantly in society as bearers of morality was their conviction they could exercise their greatest power and influence in the world as mothers. Since children (society's future leaders and citizens) begin their learning experience at home under close maternal guidance, it was only logical that mothers could influence mankind's future by effectively educating the young. Hence, as evidenced by Cárdenas' following comment, motherhood was considered the source of women's fulfillment rather than an obstacle: "Y, sobre todo, tengo a mi cargo un magisterio inmensamente noble y de grandes responsabilidades, cuya finalidad será el triunfo de mi vida: la educación de mis hijos."¹⁵

More specifically, Vásquez wrote:

. . . creemos que la verdadera protección al niño su salud, su porvenir, su desarrollo moral están en las manos de la madre, contando conque ella sea la educadora abnegada y científica de sus hijos. Si lo que hace el feminismo mal entendido es arrancar a la mujer de su centro principal [el hogar], pervertir su naturaleza e inclinarle a la veleidad, considerar que el matrimonio y la maternidad son insoportables cargas; entonces entramos en plena regresión, oponemos un muro infranqueable al progreso y la moralidad y cometemos la más negra traición a la causa

feminista. La mujer necesita perfeccionarse y no buscar por ideal un tipo anómalo que no sea hombre ni mujer definidamente.

Es necesario penetrarse en que el ideal está en que ella sea una mujer de verdad y no un remedo ni una imitación del hombre.¹⁶

Turning to the more global responsibilities of motherhood in society, Cárdenas exhorted: "La mujer está llamada en la hora actual a poner todo su esfuerzo en la regeneración social; ella, y sólo ella puede combatir el cáncer que nos devora, y desde ahora, que nunca es tarde, enseñar a sus hijos, desde tiernecitos, con la señal de la cruz, el amor cívico, el amor de la Patria, con el respeto a Dios, el respeto a las leyes, el respeto a la mujer"¹⁷

In effect, Cárdenas, Váscónez, Borja, and Rendón wrote extensively about the urgency of women's fully assuming their natural roles in society. According to feminist/*marianista* thinking in Ecuador, all of society was viewed as one large family, and consequently, the mother's function went far beyond individual domestic situations. Women were no longer to be ignorant slaves to their husbands, divorced from world problems and concerns, nor were they to be purely capricious beings devoted solely to their toilette. Rather, women were to consider themselves *supermadres* in charge of establishing harmony and understanding in their large *casa*, the nation.¹⁸

Upon recognizing their potential, women leaders doubled their efforts to organize charitable groups which sponsored a variety of programs for the protection of orphans, unwed mothers, and the poor.¹⁹ Women clearly drew their strength from serving others, as indicated by Váscónez's observation: "La mujer moderna . . . ambiciona no sólo bastarse a sí misma, sino aliviar a sus ancianos padres, ayudar al esposo pobre o enfermo, satisfacer las necesidades de sus pequeñuelos

adorados, favorecer a los pobres, contribuir para todo lo que sea servicio de su Dios y de su patria, . . ."²⁰

In short, an essential element in Ecuadorian feminism was the *marianista* concept which continually appeared in the major women writer's prose works, particularly when they tried to interpret the female situation in Ecuador. Borja summed up the full meaning of Ecuadorian feminism, in terms of *marianismo*:

He dicho repetidas veces que no debe usurpar el puesto de los hombres, y que debe tener siempre por base la más exquisita espiritualidad; pero, no es que me acoja a esa sensibilidad morbosa que impide a la mujer toda actividad de cooperación colectiva en las exigencias de la vida actual, ni el retraso en los avances de la ciencia y la civilización. Tengo para mí, que la mujer que sólo sabe de aplanchar y de zurcir, de nada sabe; pero, para remediar estas flaquezas que la hacen andar siempre paso a paso en las operaciones de la vida, atada tristemente a su sopor colonial, sin sentir dentro de sí que la humanidad la reclama como madre consciente, como educadora de colectividades futuras y como símbolo de toda ella, no es preciso que abandone los sagrados deberes del hogar, ni se despoje de la finura exquisita de su espíritu con que colora y matiza la orientación de la vida, cuando con su corazón, rebosante de ternura besa los blancos cabellos de la ancianidad y, también se inclina amantísima delante de la cuna, con el noble prestigio de la maternidad.²¹

Feminism: The Theme of Suffrage

Naturally, feminism as a literary theme offered writers more material than merely the morality and motherhood issues already discussed. Basically, writers defended women's ability to make constructive contributions to a world that traditionally denied them the opportunity to participate fully in society's development. Although female intellectuals considered the maternal role their primary function, they noted vehemently that this in no way implied they were inferior or less important than men.

In fact, women recognized their special skills were as essential to human progress as men's abilities, and therefore, they demanded that both sexes share the same rights and responsibilities. Hence, suffrage, greater participation in politics, equal opportunities, and legal reforms became popular topics among Ecuador's chief women writers of the pre-World War II period.

Of all the feminist writers, Cárdenas was the most outspoken proponent of women's suffrage in Ecuador. Time and time again, with sarcasm she bitterly attacked men's assertion that women were not qualified to vote:

¿Quién fue el iluso, el falaz que quiso que la mujer, ese ser tan inferior, tuviera iguales derechos cívicos que el hombre? ¡Eloy Alfaro! ¿Quizá en su visión, de grande alcance político, no vio que la "bella durmiente" algún día despertaría? Y es así como ahora la mujer ecuatoriana es tratada de beata ignorante; imasa inconsciente, rebaño de imbéciles! ¿Quisiera que me dijese si los hombres que votan, todos son Sócrates, Cicerones, Demóstenes, Sénecas, Catones y Brutos? Lo mejor es que la mayoría de los que así se expresan jamás en la vida han sido capaces ni siquiera de entender lo que es el derecho al voto.²²

While Ecuadorian women were the first Latin American females to receive national suffrage (1929), there were occasional attempts by legislators to rescind the law, supposedly because of women's poor educational background and close ties to the Roman Catholic Church. Cárdenas, however, rejected the official arguments and emphasized male shortcomings:

¿Las razones para quitar el voto a las mujeres? Las de siempre: que la mujer no está preparada, que son rebaños de curas y frailes, etc. Querría decir que los hombres sí lo están y que a ellos no les maneja ni sugestiona nadie.

Y la historia prueba hasta la evidencia que un buen gobernante y un verdadero hombre de Estado es el más raro y extraordinario de los milagros y que si los pueblos andan y progresan es a pesar de la política siempre manejada por los hombres. ¿Rebaños?

Que ciertos viejos liberales-radicales quieran privar de sus derechos cívicos a la mujer ecuatoriana, es muy explicable.

Los viejos siempre están en pugna con el avance de la civilización.²³

In 1938, Cárdenas again reproached efforts to deny women suffrage, however on this occasion, in an article entitled "El proyecto de ley electoral," she revealed the furtive means adopted by the legislature to encroach on women's rights:

Tengo que decir a las mujeres ecuatorianas que, a través de rodeos y limitaciones, se quitó el voto a la mujer en el proyecto de ley electoral que la comisión ha presentado al Gobierno. No puede votar quien no tenga solvencia económica. Con esta disposición se da lugar a discusiones sin cuento, para buscar el resultado de impedir el sufragio femenino salvo a viudas, cocineras y sirvientes a las cuales se les exige un papeleo endiablado y, por fin, si logran probar esa solvencia, les queda aún el trámite de certificados de escuelas y colegios. Las mujeres de la clase acomodada no pueden votar por su dependencia económica. Las mujeres del pueblo, por su falta de instrucción. Total ninguna.²⁴

Generally speaking, Cárdenas was not seeking any favors or special treatment for women, but rather she was urging male politicians to accept their female counterparts as full-fledged citizens, worthy of the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by men:

Lo justo, lo natural es que a la mujer se le exijan las mismas condiciones que al hombre.

¿Que al hombre le basta leer y escribir para ser ciudadano? Pues, lo propio para la mujer. ¿Que al hombre se le va a exigir algo más? Pues, que se le exija también algo más a la mujer.²⁵

Notwithstanding Cárdenas' vehemence, other writers did not consider suffrage to be an essential issue for women, most likely because the

electoral process has never played a meaningful role in Ecuadorian politics.²⁶ Also, female intellectuals tended to believe women were still not prepared to undertake the serious responsibilities identified with suffrage. Vásconez wrote: "No vamos a llamar a la mujer a un campo de acción para el cual aun [sic] no está preparada; no le insinuaremos que se presente en la palestra política, que intervenga en los comicios, ni vaya a la Legislatura, . . ."²⁷ In similar fashion, Borja commented: "En la gran desorbitación de las funciones políticas de nuestras democracias, el ejercicio del voto no es lo que más nos interesa, porque, vuelvo a ratificar mi opinión tantas veces expuesta, de que el voto de la mujer sin preparación cívica, sólo sirve de instrumento ciego en las grandes orientaciones nacionales."²⁸

In the case of Rendón, she went as far as denying the need for suffrage and suggested women could get greater mileage out of a more subtle approach to politics:

Ella no necesita ir a las urnas electorales para sufragar por el candidato de sus simpatías; le basta influir en la voluntad de su esposo, hermanos e hijos, para ganarse los votos. Sus razonamientos, aunque no sean acatados en el instante, pero poco a poco y sin hacer sentir al hombre, le sujetan a sus deseos; en verdad, ella no necesita de quien represente sus derechos en las Cámaras Legislativas, ya que imperando en el corazón del hombre, puede dictar leyes en favor de su sexo, y al hacerlo, hácelo en el bien de ella y en el de sus semejantes.²⁹

Feminism: The Theme of Equality

Whereas many of Cárdenas' female contemporaries tended to rationalize sexist arguments that preserved political inequalities among men and women, she refused to accept a double standard which condoned male ignorance while punishing female ignorance. Moreover, she rejected the

idea that women's domestic duties prevented effective political participation outside of the home: "No creo yo que todas las mujeres estén preparadas para esos puestos, como los hombres tampoco; pero sí las hay y muy buenas, desde luego; . . . De lo que sí tenemos que convencernos es de que no está reñida la Política ni la Administración con los deberes de las mujeres en el hogar: ellas se alcanzan para todo y cumplen con sus deberes mejor o más a conciencia que el hombre."³⁰

In effect, Cárdenas' feminist writings frequently argued that women were not inferior to men because of natural or divine law, and given an equal opportunity, they could compete successfully with the so-called stronger sex. In terms of participation in the political arena, she wrote:

¿Por qué no puede la mujer ocuparse en la Política? La Política no es lo que la juzgan nuestros hombres, o más bien dicho, lo que de ella han hecho los hombres que se creen políticos, una cosa áspera y dura, miserable y grosera, un maridaje de traiciones y ambiciones, cuyo fruto es el medro de los más audaces y más cínicos.

La Política es el engrandecimiento de la Patria, no sólo materialmente, sino moralmente; . . . Política es el arte de saber gobernar. . . . La mujer no sólo por afición debe ocuparse en política: debe hacerlo como un deber, para poder preparar a sus hijos a que sean buenos servidores de su Patria en cualquier terreno en que les toque actuar. . . .

Ahora, ¿por qué no puede la mujer ocupar un puesto en la administración del país? ¿No hay mujeres como Rosa Borja de Icaza, suficientemente preparadas? . . . Y, por último, señores míos, hay que conformarse con la evolución de los tiempos, y dejarse de las nimiedades de antaño. La mujer está capacitada y preparada para competir con vuestas mercedes.³¹

Vásconez also protested man's reputed superiority: "Protestamos contra el concepto que atribuye a la mujer la sujeción y al hombre la libertad: de dos seres de la misma naturaleza, ha de ser el uno superior al otro? No desempeñan los dos importantísimas funciones,

no son necesarios, ambos, a la armonía? ¿Por qué la mujer, en cualquier estado, madre o hija, esposa o hermana, ha de ser inferior al hombre? Habrá diversidad de funciones, pero no de naturaleza, . . ."³²

It is clear the double standard with its numerous contradictions tormented many promising female intellectuals who had sacrificed and studied to become useful citizens only to discover that their talents and skills were not taken seriously by a male-dominated society. Váscónez, in an article entitled "Tristeza," depicted the pessimism and sense of futility experienced by many of her contemporaries who had fought persistently against longstanding prejudices and injustices: "Tristeza cuando encontré sombrío el porvenir de la mujer. ¿Ideales? Alegrías ficticias, amores pocas veces sinceros, educación deficiente siempre, perjudicial a veces, y luego, la supuesta inferioridad de la mujer respecto del hombre, inferioridad dada no por la naturaleza sino por la sociedad y las costumbres."³³

Despite women's bleak situation, Váscónez did believe they were capable of effecting some changes. However, as she explained in 1922, female unity and organization were essential in their struggle to win equality because as isolated individuals they were weak and ineffective, while as a group they would be stronger and more aggressive when defending their rights: "La mujer, más que el hombre, necesita asociarse, pues que poco a nada conseguiría al ir sola a defender sus ideales. Habéis hecho muy bien en asociaros, porque, solas, os creen débiles e incapaces de ejercer derechos; mientras que, unidas por el vínculo de ideas y sentimientos idénticos, formaréis un núcleo que no podrá menos que ser respetado."³⁴ Similarly, on another occasion she

commented that women had to take charge of their own destinies: "La reforma en la educación femenina será lenta si la mujer misma no toma parte en ella. Muy recomendable sería que fuera la mujer antes que los hombres y que los gobiernos quien trabajara por su mejoramiento."³⁵

With regard to equality before the law, Rendón studied Ecuador's legal codes and wrote about the many contradictions that were prejudicial to women. She deplored the adultery laws which punished women outright while considering men guilty only when they committed the crime in their own home; she criticized the laws for punishing the prostitutes while ignoring the procurers; she attacked the abortion laws for punishing women while ignoring men's complicity, either as seductors or as those who convinced women to carry out the crime. In effect, Rendón protested:

El Código Penal, no castiga al hombre que fue causante de estos delitos que ocasionó su abandono [el de la mujer], la necesidad, el hambre, la desnudez. Y sin embargo, que tanto ha adelantado el feminismo, todavía tenemos esos vicios ancestrales, que no desaparecen del mundo que se precia de civilizado. La lucha de la mujer por recobrar su dignidad y ocupar el puesto que le corresponde, como ser dotado de la misma inteligencia del hombre, recorre los continentes, demostrando al mundo que es capaz de todas las conquistas del pensamiento en todos los postulados y profesiones del hombre.³⁶

Other Themes

It should be remembered that the chief writers of this second stage in women's prose development were highly educated, aware of the many problems common throughout the world, and consequently, they did not limit their prose works to the feminist themes. For example, Cárdenas, Borja, and Rendón frequently wrote about the urgent need for pacifism in the world, particularly since they considered violence and strong-arm

tactics in politics the chief obstacles to realizing justice and freedom.

Appealing to young people to reform their ways, Cárdenas wrote:

Y perdóneme la juventud: ella es en cierto modo la responsable de las tiranías, porque ella también quiere afianzar su ideal y su idea por medio de la violencia. Ahí está el gran error, porque la juventud no quiere entender que sólo con la pluma y la palabra que razona se puede evolucionar y sembrar los principios y afianzar las ideas. Jamás con los atropellos e insultos; estos no consiguen sino hacer reaccionar en sentido contrario a las masas.³⁷

Borja suggested that a considerable part of the overall instability common to the Gran Colombian countries could be attributed to their long history of violence in which "la devastación política atropelló hasta sus propias intuiciones, i, [sic] en su dolorosa disgregación, asesinó a Sucre, mató a Bolívar, y a través de las pasiones, dejó para esta defectuosa civilización el atavismo de la desconfianza, causa perturbadora de toda interpretación psicológica justa y recta en el proceso emocional de las masas."³⁸

Women's pacifism, of course, was consistent with their *marianista* thinking, especially since wars and violence endangered the lives of their children. Therefore, many female intellectuals espoused non-violence because of their maternal instincts, quickly incorporating it into their activities designed to better society. Borja explained:

Para que la mujer realice la fraternidad grando-colombiana [sic] tiene que desarrollar en sus hijos, con su preparación al futuro, el sentimiento de paz, afirmado siempre en la utilidad colectiva, creadora de empresas y cultura; y en el sector que le corresponde, formar legiones de verdaderas madres que suavicen fronteras y den a nuestra civilización, en el hondo sentido de la vida, la verdadera expresión de Humanidad.³⁹

With regard to a mother's fear of losing a child at war, Rendón dramatically offered:

¡Paz! ¿Cuándo la encontraremos sobre este valle de lágrimas? La esperanza no deja de alimentar nuestra mente. Ella flota en el espacio como el Arco Iris. Le debemos buscar a porfía. ¿Y, a quién le corresponde más de cerca, sino a la MUJER que amamanta a su hijo? ¡Que sea el ALELUYA UNIVERSAL para todas las conciencias!

La mujer que en sus brazos mece al niño y en sus cantares y arrullos le adormece y enjuga su llanto, tiembla de pánico al pensar que a su hijo por quien derramó su sangre y tuvo noches de vigilia y de inquietudes, le verá marchar a la guerra.⁴⁰

Further on she continued: "El mundo espera impaciente nuestra inmediata cooperación. . . . Para esto no se requieren condiciones especiales. Toda mujer está capacitada para ejercer su apostolado de paz."⁴¹

Moving completely away from maternal concerns, Cárdenas was a fiery critic of Ecuadorian politicians, tirelessly attacking their lies and failings. Generally speaking, the country's political situation was in a shambles and Cárdenas was set on making her readers aware of the realities. In typical fashion, she complained: "La política genuinamente ecuatoriana; . . . lo que aquí se llama política y se practica es una guerra ciega de pasiones, atropellos y, consiguientemente, de insultos y calumnias, en que la moral y la dignidad desaparecen; es un huracán de fuerzas brutas que se arremolinan y acometen y destruyen con furor demoníaco."⁴²

Like numerous other women writers, Cárdenas was deeply concerned over Ecuadorian problems, and consequently, she frequently felt impelled to use her writing skills when defending national ideals and values. For example, after being sharply criticized for having published the results of a political survey dealing with Ecuadorian dictatorships, she responded unflinchingly: "¿Qué importa que perros en jauría aullen ferozmente en el ocaso de mi vida? No lograrán amedrentarme."⁴³ Obviously, Cárdenas

was a writer committed to her profession, and to the truth: "Véome obligada a romper la promesa, hecha voluntariamente a personas que amo y estimo, de no ocuparme en las cosas públicas; pero ya una vez que defendí la libertad de imprenta, sostuve que guardar silencio en ciertas ocasiones estimaba yo como un crimen."⁴⁴

With regard to freedom of the press, she wrote categorically:

Ella es el faro que alumbra el camino de los energúmenos que se llaman políticos; ella es la voz del pueblo que sufre y calla. Ella, la prensa, es la patria misma, pues ¿quién sino ella da el grito de alarma cuando tratan de humillarnos?

La imprenta con dogal es la peor vergüenza de una nación, y esa vergüenza la debemos a la Asamblea de 1929.⁴⁵

Vásconez also was actively involved in analyzing national problems, and in an article reminiscent of Bello's *Silva a la agricultura de la zona tórrida*, she discussed the important role agriculture would play in Ecuador's future:

En esta paradisíaca tierra ecuatoriana guarda el suelo tesoros de leyenda y son esos los tesoros que enterraron los Incas. Esta pródiga madre, al proporcionar a sus hijos noble y ventajosa ocupación, hará que la espada, pronta a desenvainarse en desastrosas guerras fratricidas, sea en el "útil arado convertida."

El trabajo agrícola abrirá en el Ecuador la anhelada nueva ruta en que se ejercitará el esfuerzo de miles de seres, sedientos de actividad y de oro.

La agricultura creará en el país una raza de hombres sanos y fuertes, porque le arrancará del apiñamiento e infecundo afanar de la ciudad.⁴⁶

Further on, in almost prophetic fashion, Vásconez continued: "Y tendiendo la vista al porvenir, allá una tierra ignota, un bello país encantado surge en ese que un día será el verdadero Oriente ecuatoriano."⁴⁷

In conclusion, 1922-1945 was a significant period in the development of female prose writers in Ecuador, particularly since an increas-

ing number of women were turning to literature as their most effective means of making known their beliefs and concerns. As illustrated by Cárdenas, Váscónez, Borja, and Rendón, women writers were producing committed literature designed, on the one hand, to defend women's rights, and on the other hand, to criticize the nation's most flagrant shortcomings. Moreover, while female writers were challenging many traditional stereotypes and proving women were capable of being first class citizens, eager to contribute to the nation's future growth and progress, their literature clearly reflected the chief female concerns and priorities of the period, a source of material essential to fully understanding the women of Ecuador.

Women Writers: 1945 to the Present

Following World War II, an increasing number of women were exposed to greater educational opportunities and the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana offered financial and moral support to aspiring intellectuals. As a result, women writers entered a third phase in their prose development; one characterized by the emergence of purely artistic and esthetic themes. Literature, music, the plastic arts, philosophy, and religion became the chief topics explored, rather than the earlier socio-political ones. Logically, with their broader education, women began to identify with those issues that encompassed more than the Ecuadorian or Latin American reality.⁴⁸

Interestingly enough, whereas many women writers active before World War II tended to publish a steady flow of material, the post-war writers usually have felt no urgent need to communicate with

the reading public, and therefore, their prose production frequently has been sporadic and in some cases, meager. Piedad Larrea Borja and Lupe Rumazo, however, are exceptions to this trend, for they both repeatedly have published a variety of works dealing with their intellectual concerns. The following discussion, then, will focus on the prose of Larrea and Rumazo, Ecuador's principal female contemporary essayists.

Piedad Larrea Borja

Piedad Larrea Borja (1912) is an exceptional woman in Ecuadorian literature, especially since she is the only female to date who has been elected to Ecuador's Academia de la Lengua (October 25, 1968), and consequently, is one of the few Spanish-speaking women recognized as a member of Spain's Real Academia de la Lengua.⁴⁹ According to Morayma Carvajal:

Piedad es una autodidacta. Audaz, admirablemente audaz en explorar las escarpaduras de las severas disciplinas mentales y los laberintos filosóficos de todos los tiempos. Valiente en el empeño de abrirse paso, con su grande inteligencia y el poder de su intuición, por los reinos del conocimiento; ávida por rasgar los velos del enigma, encontrar el camino seguro, la respuesta cabal, la meta definida y exacta. De saber el cómo y el por qué de las cosas, de encontrar el tesoro de la verdad tras la quimera y el espejismo. Investigar, enriquecer su mundo con la austera dádiva de la sabiduría. Captar la voz omnipotente del cosmos, ir más allá por los senderos que abrieron los geniales espíritus en el espacio y en el tiempo; vigilante siempre su abierta pupila iluminada.⁵⁰

Despite Larrea's broad cultural interests, she began her writing career in much the same fashion as her predecessors--concerned with socio-political issues.⁵¹ With regard to pacifism, for example, she wrote:

¿Dónde los beneficios de la guerra? ¿Dónde los males que haya remediado? ¿La humanidad, la vida, deben algo a los tan ponderados inventos de guerra? Sería terrible el aceptarlo. Sería inhumano y cruelmente paradójal el

concebir siguiera que la vida pueda mejorar con los más refinados inventos para causar la muerte; generalmente, multitudinariamente igual, inmisericorde para todos. Que la humanidad pueda enaltecerse con la negación absoluta de todos sus nobles principios. Que el progreso sea empujado por fuerzas de destrucción.⁵²

Further on she lamented those conditions which traditionally have caused wars:

Ambiente propio para la guerra hay en medir a las naciones, no por la sabiduría de sus leyes, su progreso o sus libertades. No por sus pensadores, sus estadistas, sus científicos o sus artistas, sino simplemente por su potencialidad de comercio o de armamento. Ambiente propicio para la guerra hay, en fin, en dar sólo sentido militar a las palabras gloria y heroísmo. La legión callada de los héroes de la justicia, de la ciencia y del derecho, de todos los héroes civiles sin estatuas ni epopeyas, continúa siendo legión ignota.⁵³

Moreover, Larrea explained that pacifism was akin to women's chief function in life: "He aquí porque [sic] el pacifismo deberá ser la meta de todo ser humano. Y deberá ser especialmente, apasionada obra de mujer. Porque encarna lo más sutil y alto de nuestra misión creadora y materna. Y es aporte que todas las mujeres le debemos a la humanidad. Las madres en la creación de la nobleza espiritual del hijo."⁵⁴

Turning her attention specifically to the motherhood theme, Larrea affirmed during her early years as a writer: "Como en todas las civilizaciones primitivas, en las civilizaciones indianas de esta América nuestra, la dignificación de la mujer empieza a arraigarse en los pueblos de la dignificación del que es su más alto atributo: la maternidad."⁵⁵

Although these concerns are not typical of Larrea's work in its entirety, they do represent a logical beginning for a woman who was educated during Ecuador's most active feminist period. It is evident

she experimented with existing prose models until establishing her own style, and consequently, may be considered a transitional figure in Ecuadorian female prose who led many women writers from a pre-World War II nationalistic perspective to a post-World War II universal one. As early as 1946, for example, when publishing her first collection of essays, *Ensayos*, Larrea demonstrated the novelty of her work by including (along with the traditional material) such pieces as "Sentido y transcendencia del arte" and "De la estética en el misticismo." Moreover, after her initial attempts at writing, Larrea was the first woman writer since Marietta de Veintemilla published her *Conferencia sobre psicología moderna* (1907) who was no longer writing chiefly for newspapers or magazines.⁵⁶ In effect, rather than being an *articulista*, Larrea has become an essayist concerned with the content as well as the poetic elements of her prose material.

Unlike many of the earlier writers, Larrea has not limited artistic expression or the role of the artist to a purely social and educational plane. Besides content, beauty and form are important since, "la belleza de la forma es atributo imprescindible en la manifestación artística."⁵⁷ In fact, Larrea has written that the continuous struggle to master their craft and achieve perfection is incumbent upon the artists:

Es necesario saber, y para ello, el dolor nuevo para el artista, la tortura de la gramática y el estilo y el contrapunto y el movimiento de los dedos y los secretos del matiz y de la línea, interpuestos, como legendaria valla defensiva, entre la inspiración, el imperativo que le grita el arte, y el medio de expresión para darle cuerpo de palabra, de música o de forma. La predestinación artística, como toda predestinación, lleva en sí un mandato de superaciones, hasta lograr

la perfección. Sueño inalcanzable casi siempre; pero al que habrá de darle el artista su vida.⁵⁸

It is apparent Larrea regards the artist as a very special individual called upon to fulfill certain definite needs of modern man. Whereas Borja assigned a moral role to the artist, one which would teach man to be noble and compassionate,⁵⁹ Larrea has stated that the artist is to console man in a world characterized by sorrow and loneliness. She clearly explains: "En el beneficio milagroso de cada encarnación, en este hacerse voz de todos los silencios, y queja de todos los dolores y jubilosa resonancia de todas las alegrías y grito de todas las torturas, el arte designa y predestina, con idéntica trascendencia de misión, a todos los que deben llevar la consolación a los hombres."⁶⁰

Consequently, Larrea's concept of art, in general, and literature, in particular, does not conform to the committed type characteristic of early feminist prose in Ecuador. Rather than an attempt to move or instruct large bodies of people, she has defined art as a means of spiritual communication between the artist and the individual in need of solace. More specifically:

La expresión ["el arte está siempre 'en función social'"] me duele . . . y . . . la traigo aquí para que diga más claramente de un pensamiento que querría encerrarlo más bien así: el arte en realización misional, o: en manifestación apostólica. Si ella lleva la consolación a los hombres, si eleva sus espíritus en santas elevaciones de superación o de refinamiento cerebral o sensitivo, si dice de su dolor y sus torturas, de sus dichas y de sus amores, ¿no realiza ya su misión de mejoramiento, de ese mejoramiento que, para ser plenamente colectivo deberá arraigar en la vitalidad única y latente de lo individual?⁶¹

This almost mystical relationship that supposedly exists between the artist and the individual, this ineffable communication between two

almas, is illustrated in Larrea's essays on Chopin. Instead of writing a biographical sketch about one of her favorite musicians, Larrea tries to demonstrate her total identification with Chopin, achieved by allowing the music to act as the catalyst:

Para el mundo interior de Chopín, el otro, el de fuera, en lo físico no contaba. El dijo el mensaje no recibido de elemento alguno, nacido en las raíces mismas de su vida. Y a la Humanidad legó simplemente su alma. Pura. Desnuda de paisaje. Limpia de elementos externos. . . . Porque el arte de Chopín es su vida. . . . Por eso despierta en nosotros la emoción que sólo conocen las fuerzas eternas de la vida: el dolor y el amor.⁶²

Further on, she continues:

Por eso la música será la única poseedora de todas las reconditeces de su alma y de su pensamiento. . . . Recordemos más bien a Vicent d'Yndy [sic] y a Schumann y a Berlioz y a Listz [sic]. Memorias, notas, explicaciones, recuerdos, críticas, crónicas. En todos la palabra diciendo o aclarando o explicando sus emociones o sus conceptos. Pero Chopín, no. Chopín sólo encuentra para la vibración infinita de su alma suprasensible, la vibración del piano. Y para decir de su tormento o de sus esperanzas, de su angustia y sus amores y sus ensueños, sólo el signo del pentagrama.⁶³

Larrea's deep sensitivity and ability to perceive the indescribable emotions and realities that surround her are manifest once again in her work when she writes "Itinerario emocional de Roma":

Y no dejéis tampoco a vuestros oídos escuchar la voz de Roma al final de vuestro viaje. Esa voz, la del ayer, la de hoy, la de siempre; voz tentadora de sirenas; eterna y universal voz del agua. Esa voz viva de las fontanas, ha de cantaros su canción de melancolías para la partida. En la Fontana de Trevis--la del dios Neptuno, la de la abundosa y clara fuente virgen--la voz tentadora se hace promesa de retornos. . . . Y si la moneda que eché en ella, en la melancolía de mi despedida a Roma, no ejerce su virtud, su virtud de mi regreso material, junto a la vuestra habrá de ir recorriendo sus recuerdos mi emoción.⁶⁴

Other works published by Larrea are: *Abenhazam en la literatura arábigoespañola*, *Juglaresca en España*, and *Habla femenina quiteña*.⁶⁵

In short, whether writing about music, literature, or linguistics, Larrea is an essayist whose work has been an exercise in evoking the mysteries and emotions of other times, other people, and other places. Moreover, rather than protesting society's shortcomings, Larrea has offered modern readers an opportunity to explore new worlds and new sensations, which perhaps is her way of consoling her fellow man.

Lupe Rumazo

During the last fifteen years, Lupe Rumazo (1935)⁶⁶ has emerged as one of Ecuador's principal contemporary essayists (regardless of sex) who has cultivated a broad spectrum of literary themes, ranging from moralism in Faulkner to structuralism in Sarduy. Upon reading her three collections of essays,⁶⁷ Rumazo's concept of Latin American letters becomes clear: she rejects both the *criollista*-type form and the purely structuralist trend prevalent among numerous contemporary writers. On the one hand, the localist writers fail to produce sound literature because of their highly limited perspective, while on the other hand, the structuralists are too removed from the human aspects essential to literary expression. Summing up, Rumazo writes:

Ni realismo ni formalismo puros, por tanto. Ni realismo que excluya el libre juego de lo creativo, en sentido estricto; ni formalismo que trate de volar sobre las cosas como desasido de ellas. Más bien un compromiso verdadero con la realidad libertada de las "circunstancias," a fin de que tienda a la universalidad. Es decir: una llama que no queme solamente hoy, sino siempre y en todas partes. O bien: descubrir en cada página la glándula pineal del organismo literario: esa especie de tercer ojo interno, hermético, sin cuyas vívidas perforaciones es incompleta la visión de los ojos externos.⁶⁸

In effect, Rumazo has criticized the tendency to write committed literature which attacks the many social problems of Latin America while ignoring the far-reaching elements of human existence: "La literatura joven, que sería el caso de la nuestra, latinoamericana, quédase con frecuencia en el planteamiento de los problemas; delata lo injusto, por ejemplo, pero no va más allá."⁶⁹ In addition, she has rejected the latest structuralist experiments (i.e., Sarduy and the *novela de lenguaje*) because they tend merely to imitate foreign models while ignoring the crucial realities of Latin America:

Si en América existe . . . la margen buena de la experimentación vital, que desborda por creadora cualesquiera esquemas, estructurales o no--Asturias, Neruda, Carpentier, Cortázar, Sábato, César Vallejo, Rulfo, Borges, Onetti, Pareja Diezcanseco, Vargas Llosa, Uslar Pietri, Jorge Icaza en *Atrapados*, José Donoso, Otero Silva, Alfonso Rumazo González en *Aquelarre*, Clara Silva, Gustavo Luis Carrera--, existe también la de la experimentación buscada, de hombro débil arrimado a hombro fuerte extranjero. Suena ya la cadena en los pasos del escritor americano. Los eslabones tienen nombres: Fuentes (sólo en parte, . . .); Cabrera Infante (a pesar de su valía), Sarduy, Basilia Papastamatiu, Isel Rivero, Néstor Sánchez, Gustavo Sainz. Recios escritores, varios de ellos, . . .--no descalificamos enteramente su producción--. : . Causa y agobia ya su pregón: "voto por el lenguaje, hago obra de lenguaje, el lenguaje es mi personaje."⁷⁰

With regard to Sarduy, specifically, she protests:

Confundiendo el juego y el arte--por jugar se puede hacer lo que se quiera--Sarduy desata un cáncer de las palabras, crea el caos, produce un relato débil, aunque de meticulosa elaboración, desencadena una tempestad barroca. En realidad experimenta. La experimentación suya no se explica como trasunto de una justa reacción socio-económica, ni porque el escritor crecido de espíritu, vigoroso en sus élitros, vuélvase ciudadano del mundo íntegro, ni porque exprese la fecundación febril y de vasos comunicantes de una misma cultura occidental. No. Sarduy trabaja con esquemas dados, siguiendo normas de otros que no se injertan íntimamente dentro de su ser, como no podrán hacerlo

integralmente tampoco en nuestra América. No hay influencias . . . sino imitación, deplorable imitación.⁷¹

The ideal literary model, according to Rumazo, is the one which combines *lo americano* and the universal elements naturally identified by all readers--a literature which reveals the uniqueness of Latin America without shutting off the continent from the rest of human experience. Rumazo has called this type of literature *intrarrealismo*, questioning the appropriateness of Seymour Menton's terminology, *neorrealismo*: "Neorrealismo, como neoclasicismo o neoromanticismo, indican revitalización, resurrección. Nosotros . . . no volvemos la vista al realismo literario. Ya se ha visto que sólo una parte y justamente la que no hace generación sigue difundiendo tal simiente de índole social. En nuestra concepción lo social pasa a segundo plano aunque lo explotemos; interesa más, . . . entregar un asir nuevo de los hechos, seres y cosas."⁷² Consequently, she has invented what is supposedly a more precise term:

INTRARREALISMO, lo nombraría yo . . . por metido dentro de la realidad cotidiana y por introducido doblemente en la realidad metafísica. Realismo dos veces real, pues amalgama lo temporal y lo permanente, y a ambos cuestiona. . . . Y que sin tener la estructura de un movimiento ni la corporeidad de una escuela, es ya definitivamente coexistencia o coincidencia de idéntica tendencia. Hay un rumbo marcado en las nuevas voces americanas, una fijación de una única personalidad, aunque cada autor conserve su estricta individualidad. Rumbo que por un lado implica desasimiento del realismo social y por otro puesta de primeras piedras, al menos dentro de la literatura americana. La "rebelión metafísica" ciertamente ofrece carácter inaugural si va acompañada de una tónica diferenciada: lenguaje escueto, objetividad, poder de sugerencia, tiempo presente, escepticismo, fuerte conciencia histórica, técnica moderna, cotidianeidad, anti-insularismo y, esencialmente, tono americano inconfundible.⁷³

The most interesting point, and the most debatable one, made by Rumazo when discussing *intrarrealismo* is her assertion that Latin American women have constituted the principal voices in this new literature:

Pero su victoria mayor [la de las mujeres] radica en la forja del INTRARREALISMO, ímpetu nuevo, que indirectamente convierte las voces innovadoras en voces generacionales, El laboreo viene sencillo y hermoso: "se trata de ver y tocar raíces y sacarlas a la luz." O, valga decir, introducirse muy dentro en la realidad, sin olvidar el esplendor de lo metafísico. Procediendo como hijas de Jano, el dios bifronte que tiene en mención de Ovidio "dos rostros porque ejerce su imperio sobre el cielo, la tierra y el mar," las autoras intrarrealistas cambian la faz de América al involucrarla en preocupaciones universales, sin apartarla de lo suyo propio e intransferible.⁷⁴

Although her terminology and her discussion about the desirability of combining *americanista* and universal elements in literature may be acceptable, Rumazo's thesis falls on two basic counts. In the first place, with regard to fiction, she emphasizes women's role in producing *intrarrealista* literature while playing down the contributions made by Borges, Carpentier, Yáñez, Asturias, and even some of the modernists who are now understood to have also reflected their Latin American reality in universal terms (i.e., Darío's "El rey burgués," *Azul*, 1888). An argument which denies the successful blending of americanist and transcendental elements in *El señor presidente*, *Al filo del agua*, or *Los pasos perdidos* because the authors often employ highly intellectual techniques, appears to be rather simplistic thinking. In the second place, although perhaps less objectionable, to include poetry in a discussion of *intrarrealismo*, or any other derivative of realism, is questionable since poetry is usually subjective, not realistic.

Apparently, Rumazo was aware of some of her essay's limitations since in 1969 she published an article entitled, "Teoría del intrarrealismo," in which she rectified:

¿Las escritoras, las novelistas, las ensayistas o poetisas solamente? Más tarde, profundizando en la generación masculina de la última promoción, pude dar con un renacimiento correlativo. . . . He hallado que la tendencia intrarrealista masculina existía en todo caso, aunque la pendulación fuera quizá más fuerte de la orilla femenina. Unos y otras querían para su América idéntico destino. Ese destino--que Unamuno llamó "la americanidad" y que ya mostró con prodigalidad de rico noble el Modernismo, también americano--significaba concretamente ampliar el domicilio de la América Latina, tan crecida, ubicándolo en el propio lar y en el mundo total.⁷⁵

Notwithstanding some disputable conclusions, this essay on *intrarrealismo*, in general, is a very valuable review of the numerous Latin American women writers who have made major contributions to the continent's literature. On other occasions, Rumazo has tried to interpret the Latin American female experience, but outside the literary context:

En América--esa América que no es una, sino muchas distintas--no hay un exclusivo tipo femenino. De la india esclava, hoy todavía ente de conquista, a la negra de las prolongadas zonas hirvientes, casi no media trecho. Son las sometidas, las atormentadas, el grado máximo del abajamiento. Allí no se vislumbra todavía lo que puede ser una mujer; se conoce sí una parte, y muy noble: el sacrificio. Luego: la del pueblo, mestiza en las montañas, mulata en las costas, también aplastada, pero menos, apenas sí puede instruirse. Ambiciones, generalmente, muy tenaz, inagotable, hace de gran motor que eleva e impulsa a sus hijos. De muchas de esas madres brotan los varones mayores de América. Hijos esforzados de fuente cercada. La de estrato medio, bachillera o universitaria, muy otra concepción tiene de la existencia. No acepta una situación dada, aboga por un mejoramiento; hace filas en las cruzadas feministas; vive ella misma con los ojos fijos en la cristalización de un plan vital. Ya el ser femenino empieza a irradiar. En las de sociedad, hoy en

mucho con nivel universitario, el dinero y la mixtificación momifican cualesquiera ímpetus esenciales. Las extraordinarias se salvan; el gran número desciende a convertirse en objeto refinado, hermoso, decorativo, pero parasitario. La mujer pierde ahí un significado.

De todas estas capas, escasamente de la primera y en grado máximo de la intermedia, emerge la mujer de letras.⁷⁶

In conclusion, besides the topics mentioned above, Rumazo in other essays discusses the use of time in the modern novel; she comments on such authors as Camus, Tolstoy, Kafka, Ortega, Hemingway, and Garcilaso de la Vega. In general, it may be said that she is an essayist who has read widely and who has written about her many literary and Latin Americanist concerns, constituting the latest manifestation in the development of Ecuadorian women prose writers. Whereas Larrea broke away from the traditional mold of committed literature to exalt the human emotions and her own sensitivity, Rumazo has tended to combine her intellectual pursuits with her genuine concerns of Latin America (above all Latin American letters), contributing to the so-called *intrarrealista* literature. The main shortcoming of her writing, however, is the obvious attempt to display all her knowledge in each essay, a characteristic which invariably leads to the digressions and confusion common to Juan Montalvo's classical essays. By her own confession, she is a very meticulous writer who continually tries to foresee the reader's questions and doubts: "No soy escritora de ritmo rápido, sino de faenar lento, de segurísimo deambular, de revisiones reiteradas, siempre consciente o inconscientemente con la presencia de un tribunal al frente."⁷⁷

Some of the other women who have published prose worthy of mention during the last thirty years are Eulalia Pérez Chiriboga, María Luisa

Bustamente de Pérez, María Esther de Andrade Coello, María Guillermina García Ortiz, Violeta Luna, Jenny Romero Pape, Aliz Fernández Salvador de Raza, Germania Moncayo de Monge, Isabel Moscoso de Dávila, and Martha Páez.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, however, their production has been sporadic; some have abandoned prose to devote more time to poetry while others have stopped writing because of lack of time, insufficient funds, or the absence of public support, in general.

Notes
Chapter IV

¹This chapter's discussion of prose refers only to expository writing. Fiction will be treated in Chapters V and VI.

²This chapter only discusses the works written by Cárdenas, Vásconez, Borja, and Rendón because, unlike other women writers of the same era (i.e., María Luisa Calle, Zoila Ugarte de Landívar, Blanca Martínez de Tinajero, Delia Ibarra de Dueñas, María Piedad Castillo de Leví, and numerous others who preferred to use pseudonyms), they published whole collections of articles and essays, making their prose more accessible. It should be noted that there exists a plethora of female prose material in the many newspapers published in Ecuador. Since this other material is similar in purpose and perspective to the works of Cárdenas, Vásconez, Borja, and Rendón, the latter may be considered representative of the writers who were active during 1922-1945.

³"Literary Archetypes and Female Role Alternatives: The Woman and the Novel in Latin America," in *Female and Male in Latin America: Essays*, ed. Ann Pescatello (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1973), p. 20.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁵*Honor al feminismo* (Quito: Imprenta Nacional, 1922), p. 9.

⁶"Marianismo: The Other Face of Machismo in Latin America," in *Female and Male in Latin America: Essays*, p. 91.

⁷*Vida de Mariana de Jesus* (Quito: Imprenta "Bona Spes," 1940), p. 13.

⁸"Influencia de la mujer como factor importante en el mejoramiento humano," *Aspectos de mi sendero* (Guayaquil: Editorial Jouvin, 1930), p. 100.

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 120-123.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹¹Zoila Rendón, *La mujer en el hogar y en la sociedad*, 3rd ed. (Quito: Editorial Universitaria, 1961), p. 78.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁴Borja, "La mujer moderna y la obrera," *Aspectos de mi sendero*, pp. 128-129.

¹⁵"La mujer y la política," *Oro, rojo y azul* (Quito: Editorial Artes Gráficas, 1943), p. 59.

¹⁶*Actividades domésticas y sociales de la mujer* (Quito: Talleres Tipográficos Nacionales, 1925), pp. 7-8.

¹⁷"Por la mujer," *Oro, rojo y azul*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁸See Elsa M. Chaney, "Women in Latin American Politics: The Case of Peru and Chile," in *Female and Male in Latin America: Essays*, pp. 104-139. In this study, Chaney points out that Latin American women public officials usually look upon themselves as *supermadres* whose public work differs "only in magnitude from the nurturant [sic] and affectional tasks women perform for husband and family" (p. 104).

¹⁹A few such groups were: La Gota de Leche, El Belén del Huérfano, the Red Cross, and La Legión Femenina de Educación Popular.

²⁰*Honor al feminismo*, pp. 5-6.

²¹"Nuestro programa," *Hacia la vida* (Guayaquil: Imprenta y Talleres Municipales, 1936), p. 52.

²²"La mujer y su derecho a votar," *Oro, rojo y azul*, p. 16. This article was written originally in 1932.

²³"El voto femenino y la suficiencia de los hombres," *Oro, rojo y azul*, p. 34.

²⁴*Oro, rojo y azul*, pp. 104-105.

²⁵"El voto femenino y la suficiencia de los hombres," p. 35.

²⁶It should be noted Ecuadorian women were not granted suffrage because of their own efforts, but rather because of the efforts made by conservative interest groups in Ecuadorian politics which were seeking a stronger following for possible future elections.

²⁷"Por la mujer," *Ensayos literarios* (Quito: n.p., 1922), pp. 29-30.

²⁸"Temas sobre feminismo," *Hacia la vida*, p. 89.

²⁹*La mujer en el hogar y en la sociedad*, p. 50.

³⁰"La mujer y la política," *Oro, rojo y azul*, p. 61.

³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

³²"Prólogo," *Actividades domésticas y sociales de la mujer*, pp. ix-xx.

³³*Ensayos literarios*, p. 56.

³⁴*Honor al feminismo*, p. 2.

³⁵"Por la mujer," *Ensayos literarios*, p. 39.

³⁶"La mujer en los diversos organismos humanos," *Previsión Social*, 22 (September-December 1948, January 1949), 160.

³⁷"Las tiranías en América," *Oro, rojo y azul*, pp. 44-45. This article was written originally in 1933.

³⁸"Reflexiones," *Hacia la vida*, pp. 16-17.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰*La mujer en el hogar y en la sociedad*, pp. 161-162.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁴²"¿Política?," *Oro, rojo y azul*, p. 26.

⁴³*Encuesta: ¿Qué debe hacer el Ecuador para librarse de las dictaduras?* (Quito: Litografía e Imprenta Romero, 1939), p. 189.

⁴⁴"Política y religión," *Oro, rojo y azul*, p. 31. This article criticized the campaign to nationalize the clergy while driving out of Ecuador foreign priests.

⁴⁵"Libertad de imprenta," *Oro, rojo y azul*, p. 37.

⁴⁶"Canción de primavera," *Ensayos literarios*, pp. 23-24.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 24. Ecuador's present oil prosperity is due to the Oriente's petroleum deposits.

⁴⁸Naturally, there still were women who cultivated the committed themes. However, this trend began to manifest itself more and more in fiction, as will be discussed in Chapter V. Also, poetry absorbed a great deal of women's socio-political concerns.

⁴⁹Larrea has been named Secretaria Perpetua of Ecuador's Academia.

⁵⁰*Galería del espíritu: Mujeres de mi patria*, pp. 120-121.

⁵¹She began writing for the *El Día* newspaper in Quito, signing her articles with the pseudonym Ximena de Lombay.

⁵²"Paz en la tierra," *Ensayos* (Quito: Editorial "Fray Jodoco Ricke," 1946), p. 145.

⁵³*Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

⁵⁵"Biografía de la mujer en el Ecuador," *Ensayos*, p. 57.

⁵⁶It should be remembered that much of Cárdenas, Vásconez, and Borja was originally published in Ecuadorian journals.

⁵⁷Larrea, "Sentido y trascendencia del arte," *Ensayos*, p. 16.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

⁵⁹"El arte como función social," *Hacia la vida*, p. 102.

⁶⁰"Sentido y trascendencia del arte," p. 14.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶²"Federico Chopín, expresión del romanticismo," *Nombres eternos--Senderos* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1954), pp. 29-30.

⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁶⁴*Nombres eternos--Senderos*, p. 224.

⁶⁵*Abenhazam en la literatura arábigoespañola* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1960); *Juglaresca en España* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1965); *Habla femenina quiteña* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1968). The latter suggests language is a product of one's culture, and since women are now approaching rapidly men's cultural level, the linguistic differences between the sexes (i.e., lexicon, intonation, syntax) are disappearing.

⁶⁶Rumazo also has written short stories; her fiction will be studied in Chapter VI.

⁶⁷*En el lagar* (Madrid: Ediciones EDIME, 1961); *Yunques y crisoles americanos* (Madrid: Ediciones EDIME, 1967); *Rol beligerante* (Madrid: Ediciones EDIME, 1974).

⁶⁸"El novelista comprometido," *En el lagar*, p. 205.

⁶⁹"Algo más que feminismo en Simone de Beauvoir," *En el lagar*, p. 73.

⁷⁰"La sobrehoz de la literatura estructural (escorzo)," *Rol beligerante*, pp. 75-77. This essay also published in *Letras del Ecuador*, XXIV, 141 (January 1969), 4-5.

⁷¹"Un hijo americano del estructuralismo: Relajo literario," *Rol beligerante*, p. 91.

⁷²"En torno y dentro de la literatura femenina americana en su última generación: Teoría del intrarrealismo," *Yunques y crisoles americanos*, p. 52. Rumazo makes reference to Seymour Menton's use of "neorrealismo" in *El cuento hispanoamericano*, 2nd ed. (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966), where he states (pp. 293-294):

Para su temática, los neorrealistas rehuyen tanto de la fantasía de algunos de los cosmopolitas [Borges, Rulfo, Mallea, Arreola] como del ruralismo de los criollistas. . . . No hay protesta ni contra la naturaleza ni contra los explotados humanos. Dándose cuenta de la mayor complejidad de los problemas, no ofrecen soluciones fáciles. . . . El énfasis está en un solo episodio por medio del cual el lector puede crearse todo el fondo que quiera. El estilo es escueto, sin las descripciones épicas de los criollistas ni el experimentalismo de los cosmopolitas.

⁷³*Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 126-127. Following the essay there is an index of all the names referred to in the study (pp. 131-135).

⁷⁵*Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, 234 (June 1969), 740-741.

⁷⁶"En torno y dentro de la literatura femenina americana . . .," *Yunques y crisoles americanos*, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁷*Rol beligerante*, p. 11.

⁷⁸These women's works are listed in the bibliography with the exception of *La intervención de los gobiernos en las universidades del país*, by Martha Paez, a work still to be published (as of July 28, 1975).

CHAPTER. V

THE NOVEL

Unlike journalism and the short, polemical essay, the novel has not appealed to many aspiring women writers in Ecuador during this century. In fact, there have been only fifteen novels published by women, the first dating from 1940 when Blanca Martínez de Tinajero published *En la paz del campo*.¹ The principal reasons for their limited participation in the genre have been treated in Chapter I-- i.e., social pressure, lack of education, absence of publishing houses, high costs of paper, insufficient time. Unfortunately, with respect to this evident dearth of female novelists in Ecuadorian literature,² the possibilities for significant change in the immediate future do not appear more promising. Reflecting this quagmire, Eugenia Viteri, author of *A noventa millas, solamente*,³ has stated: "Deseando escribir cada vez mejor, dejé la novela porque ella requiere mayor trabajo, esmero, tiempo, dedicación. . . . El factor tiempo en este siglo, es algo muy importante para los que llevamos una vida intensa. Compartir mis actividades de maestra, de madre, atender el hogar y tratar de vivir, de pensar en mi permanente deseo de escribir, coartado por la falta de tiempo es mucho, quizás demasiado."⁴

Nevertheless, despite the limited production and the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that have discouraged would-be novelists, most of the fifteen works published during this century constitute an

expression of feminist literature to the extent they reflect women's position in Ecuadorian society. Of course, it should be remembered there is a basic difference between feminine and feminist writing. The former term most often suggests a negative meaning since it has been associated with much of the so-called "pulp" literature (i.e., soap operas, fashion magazines, and gothic romances). The feminist material, however, is committed literature that contributes to the cause of women's liberation, performing "one or more of the following functions: (1) [to] serve as a forum for women; (2) help to achieve cultural androgyny; (3) provide role-models; (4) promote sisterhood; and (5) augment consciousness-raising."⁵ The magazine and essay forms discussed in previous chapters, clearly point to a unified attempt by many Ecuadorian women intellectuals to defend feminist interests and objectives. And, tho the novel's sparse production precludes any definition of its feminist qualities, its limited examples show that there exists in it a feminist position or perspective.

Feminist critics often reject claims that women share psychological or personality traits (i.e., passivity, sentimentality, frivolity), yet among these antagonists there is general agreement that they do exhibit group characteristics which is the result of their constituting a caste, "subject to special restrictive and limiting social influences."⁶ Thus, Ecuador's women writers, in general, and the novelists, in particular, share characteristics common to their works which are largely the result of their having to overcome prejudices and social conventions unknown to men. Viteri's remark concerning the incompatibility between the roles of novelist and mother/housewife reflects only one of the

numerous feminist problems that have conditioned many women, consciously or unconsciously, to write about a major preoccupation--their suffering in a male-dominated society.

In effect, although the fifteen novels examined in this chapter do not constitute a new literary movement nor a new *novelística*, they do deserve to be studied as a unit separate from the overall Ecuadorian narrative because, despite their numerous stylistic differences, they represent a response to reality viewed from a female perspective. In short, this chapter will focus on the fifteen novels from a feminist point of view, studying the image of women that is presented by the writers and the major concerns discussed in the works.

The first three novels were published by Blanca Martínez, an author primarily concerned with depicting the local customs and beauty of her native Ambato.⁷ Because she had used journalism on numerous occasions to give voice to the many inequities inherent in a male-dominated society, Martínez did not see any need to follow a similar feminist pattern in fiction. Indeed she wrote novels which conformed to the *costumbrista* and *criollista* schools, explaining in the prologue to *Luz en la noche*: "Hay que 'mirar con detenimiento y describir con exactitud, pues que la exactitud recóndita es virtud inmarcesible de poesía, nuestros paisajes y costumbres, inconscientes y profundos modeladores del alma.' . . . Las frases [éstas] . . . indican el camino de verdad y de belleza que debemos seguir todos cuantos intentamos mirar nuestros paisajes y describir nuestras costumbres" (p. 5).

Consequently, in the three novels, the reader continually encounters detailed descriptions of Ambato's landscape and customs:

El crepúsculo se avecinaba, rápidamente. La sombra gris azulina fue asaltando las alturas mientras las cumbres lejanas resplandecían aún. Un momento hubo que aumentó el colorido hasta casi convertirse en púrpura; luminosidad increíble, pero corta. Sólo en el más agudo picacho del Tungurahua se alargó esa despedida gloriosa. Luego, rápida, se extinguió. (*En la paz del campo*, p. 34)

Ante su vista se extendían extensas y ondulantes sementeras. Las nubes desaparecían de prisa y el Chimborazo principiaba a desembarazarse de su capotón de nieblas, mientras que los perfiles de la cordillera oriental se doraban, afirmándose el matiz violado de sus quiebras. (*Luz en la noche*, p. 12).

Concluída la ceremonia, la gente salió en busca de la *fanesca* y otros potajes propios de ese día [el Jueves Santo]. . . .

En los corredores, habitaciones y bajo nítidas tenduchas de tela se alineaban bateas con naranjas y plátanos, chirimoyas y aguacates de Patate y Pischilata. Luego, cestillas de capulíes; cacerolas humeantes de *fanesca*, purés y *picantes* de pescado. El pungente olor a condimentos se mezclaba con el sabrosísimo del dulce de higos y del pan recién sacado de los hornos.

Sentados o de pie, hombres y mujeres; ancianos y niños, charlan alegremente. (*En la paz del campo*, pp. 126-127)

In terms of feminism, while *En la paz del campo* does not offer much insight into women's position in Ecuadorian society, it does contain the following observation about Lola's cultural and educational deficiencies:

Pero ella no tenía la culpa de ignorar. La tuvo el medio ambiente. El prejuicio. Ese temor ridículo y malsano de sus padres, que temieron perderla si la ponían en otro colegio que en el de monjas. Todo encubierto, haciendo crimen de lo más sencillito. Imaginándose que mirar un desnudo era falta imperdonable. Cegando su razón, enturbiando la verdad.

Los padres de Lola, fueron como la mayoría. Siempre preocupados de la cuestión sexual. Ocultando la natural y eterna atracción, comenzaba bajo las frondas paradisíacas. (p. 392)

Obviously, society's concern over women's virginity deprived Lola of the freedom to move about and grow intellectually.

This same sexual double standard appears again when Lola's neighbors discover she has made love to Juan, the novel's protagonist. They reproach Lola but only call Juan a *sinvergüenza* while demanding a higher standard of morality of Lola: "¡Jesús! la barbaridad que ha cometido la Lolita, y el escándalo habido en el hotel! . . . es horrible! . . . Si la Lolita debe meterse en un convento y no salir más" (p. 463).

Nevertheless, since Martínez's chief aim in *En la paz del campo* is to entertain the reader, the remarks mentioned above are incidental feminist interludes. This unconcern for feminism is clearly pointed out by Angel Rojas' comments on the novel which fail to touch upon Lola's dilemma: "Amenísima es la novela de Blanca Martínez de Tinajero, . . . Es en cierto sentido, una novela de costumbres de la clase acaudalada de la sierra. . . . Se advierte cuánta facilidad tiene Blanca Martínez para escribir y qué habilidad innata posee para mantener suspenso al lector. La trama no puede estar mejor hilvanada. Las vidas burguesas allí retratadas van marchitándose suavemente, ajenas por completo al hervor social que ruge en derredor de la campiña eglógica y de las anchas casas de estilo andaluz."⁸

But for the purpose of this study, *En la paz del campo* is important because the public reaction it generated illustrates the prejudices and social pressures women writers in Ecuador have had to overcome. More specifically, when the work was submitted to Ambato's official selection committee for publication, the editorial board rejected it since the

sensuous character of Lola (supposedly a portrait of the *ambateña*) was considered offensive to Ambato and unbecoming of a lady writer: "Señora, su novela no puede ni debe ser publicada, ya por consideración a Ambato, ya por consideración a Ud.: por Ambato, porque la novela denigra a esta ciudad e infama a sus mujeres; por Ud., porque sería desdecir de su ilustre abolengo, de su rango de dama ambateña, de su alto papel de escritora y de su delicada misión de educadora."⁹

Interestingly enough, rather than becoming upset over the author's creation of a passionate woman, unworldly and imprudent, it is apparent the editorial board reacted basically against the character's being from Ambato, particularly because Beatriz, the *forastera* who embodies chastity and spiritual love, is described by the protagonist as the superior woman: "En medio de esta escena recordó a Beatriz Y bastó su recuerdo para que aumentase, no ya su frialdad, sino su repugnancia por Lola, igual a las otras; vulgar; con absoluta carencia de alma" (p. 263).

In any event, Martínez attacked official claims that references to Lola's sexual desires were not fitting for a woman writer:

¿Que soy "mujer y educadora, de ilustre abolengo, que mi rango de dama ambateña es elevado"? . . . Sí. Mujer, pero que piensa por sí misma; que razona libremente; mujer ligada al campo, su maestro, sin doblez y engaño; el mismo siempre; perfecto, gusto; que no se equivoca y que impulsa por las sendas del subconciente [sic], del amor por lo bello, donde gusta descansar la VERDAD y donde se aprende lo desdichado que es el mundo encadenado por prejuicios, hipocresías, convencionalismos, no sólo sociales sino también mentales y hasta del corazón, lastimado en la misma entraña por la mediocridad, la injusticia, la desviación de criterios, que transforman al hombre en un ser inferior a veces a esos insectos del campo, pero que siquiera viven, sin darse cuenta, recta, sencillamente, sin velos. Errores que transforman a la

mujer en un ente sin iniciativas, temeroso, débil con su alma sin alas, sin poder pensar por sí misma, considerada inferior, incapaz de atraer a la libertad consciente, convertida sobre todo cuando no se ha desarrollado en el conocimiento de las leyes inmutables y eternas, en la hembra a la que se la conquista, para luego olvidarla cuando el cuerpo ha pagado su tributo.¹⁰

Further on, after cogently pointing out that characters similar to Lola had appeared in other novels (for example, in her father's *A la costa*) without provoking anyone to suggest women from other cities had been disgraced,¹¹ it becomes obvious Martínez thought of herself as a victim of a traditional concept of female propriety that denied both Lola's right to love passionately and her right to be a free-thinking author.

Public response was more favorable with the publication of *Purificación* (1942), Martínez's second novel, a work dealing with a young priest's struggle to overcome his love for Carmen while desperately clinging to his clerical vows. Although the author uses the novel chiefly to focus on the question of religious celibacy, she nevertheless makes some comments about women's role in society. Not surprisingly, women are expected to achieve fulfillment through marriage and motherhood. As the novel opens, Don Ramón thinks about his daughter, Carmen, a thirty-four-year-old unmarried woman whose deformed back threatens her realization as a woman:

¿Por qué su naturaleza poseyó aquel germen? . . .
 ¿Dónde estuvo el comienzo de su hija? ¿Cuál fue y en
 que parte comenzó a evolucionar? . . . ¿Su hija no era
 sino continuación de la vida comenzada hacia milenarios,
 cuando Dios gustó extenderse en la nada y en el más
 infinitesimal átomo. . . . ¿Carmen estaría condenada a
 no ser el medio para la creación de otros seres? . . .
 ¿No estaría acaso en ella la sustancia para otra vida
 humana, tal vez un nuevo superhombre, mejor quizás que
 Jesús? . . . Su hija! a pesar de su desdichado rostro
 y de su lesión podía concebir y continuarla entonces
 esponjándose la vida. ¿Pero dónde estaba el que la
 amase . . .? Don Ramón deseó más que nunca que su

hija sirviese para perpetuar la humanidad. ¡No quería que se detuviese Dios! (p. 11)

Carmen is also troubled by the possibility of not becoming a wife and mother, and while praying one day, she realizes she can never find solace in a *beata*-type life: "Jesús no sabe amar como ella quisiera. . . . No! no podía recibir caricias de Jesús como las deseaba" (p. 19)! Further on Martínez writes: "Su pesadez espiritual cedía y concluyó refiriendo lo que consideraba grave falta: no conformarse con su soltería" (p. 39).

In effect, women are portrayed as leading meaningful lives only within the wife/mother context, a concept never entirely rejected by Ecuador's most vehement feminists. When describing Carmen's love for Pedro, the young priest, Martínez reinforces traditional stereotypes by commenting on women's assumed vital role in the male's search for fulfillment:

Y ella desde hace un tiempo amaba a Pedro, y deseaba decírselo personalmente, saliendo así de lo usual, porque le parecía ridículo que fuesen los hombres los que primero hablasen. No sabían dejar expresar al alma, a veces herida. Mientras que hablar una, sin temor y sencillamente debía ser deliciosa. Llegar a esa como puerta cerrada y golpearla para luego recorrer esos desconocidos jardines, proporcionando a la vez alegría y acaso también paz al solitario, porque cada alma masculina es un solitario recluso en la torre de su orgullo, de su amor propio o pesimismo. Necesitan que la desconocida se resuelva a quedarse en aquel silencioso retiro, frío en ocasiones y humillado en otras. El amor es tan sólo comprendido por ciertas mujeres que saben darse íntegra y lealmente. Entonces comienza la verdadera vida para aquellos que la han cubierto de mujeres. (p. 119)

Martínez does very little to add to this view of women in her third work, *Luz en la noche* (1950), a thesis novel somewhat reminiscent

of Gallego's *Doña Bárbara* (i.e., archetypal characters of good and evil, determinism, positivistic solutions to national problems). At one point, Doña Mercedes is said to believe, "la casa y los menesteres domésticos bastaban para asegurar el porvenir de una mujer" (p. 75). Jaime, the novel's protagonist, criticizes the frivolous ways of certain women: "Los dos, sobre todo Jaime, odiaban la pretensión de las ridículas imitadoras de la moda que no vacilaban en adoptarla, sin estudiar su tipo ni su estatura. . . . [Eran chicas] que sólo ansiaban hallar el novio joven o viejo, comerciante o doctor en leyes para liberarse del horrible cuco de la soltería" (p. 113). Also, it becomes apparent that the ideal woman is Inés, Jaime's wife who is willing to make great sacrifices for her male protector: "Inés no tenía más anhelo que amar y ser amada de Jaime, de entregarse a él sin recelo ni desconfianza" (p. 287).

In general, Martínez's three novels, characterized by numerous poetic descriptions of Ambato's people and countryside, the traditional love stories, and the omniscient narration that hinders effective character development, seem to represent a very uneventful beginning for the future Ecuadorian novelists. However, it is worthwhile recalling that in *En la paz del campo*, Martínez challenged traditional taboos with her frank treatment of a well-respected woman (Lola was supposedly the great-granddaughter of one of Ambato's heroes of the Independence period) who could not control her passions, a theme never before presented publicly in Ecuador by a woman writer.¹² In this respect, Martínez was the first woman who attempted to break down some of fiction's thematic limitations which reflected male-dominated societal patterns.

Shortly after Martínez published *Luz en la noche*, several women gradually began using the novel as a forum for the defense of their feminist interests, depicting women as victims of a *macho*-dominated society. In 1953, Mireya de Bravomalo wrote *La pena fuimos nosotras*,¹³ a work that repeatedly attacks the sexual exploitations women traditionally have suffered in Ecuador. From the outset of the novel, Gracia, the protagonist, laments women's having been reduced to mere sex objects:

El destino de una mujer--balbucía para sí--- solamente ha de ser el de permitir que la amen, sea esto cierto o falso su alma y sus sensaciones infinitas no pueden expresarse porque el hombre fanatizado en su egolatría, piensa que sus manos y su boca y sus gestos han de ser la norma de la vida . . . en su ceguera instintiva, sólo busca el despertar pasional en la mujer y al amarla pierde las emociones íntimas, las inefables fruiciones del pensamiento, de las ideas, aún de las ingenuidades del alma femenina. (pp. 3-4)

Further on she continues: "A las mujeres se nos niega el derecho a pensar, pero hay momentos en nuestras vidas en que, verdaderamente nos repugna ser objeto del ludibrio masculino" (p. 10).

Gracia's concern about being used by men appears to be a natural reaction to her first experience with love--after trusting Roberto and sharing with him her most intimate secrets and feelings he left her. Consequently, she continually feels threatened; she fears she will be taken advantage of again: "Gracia tenía miedo y más que eso, asco de que la tomaran por una cosa, un objeto animado que despertara las pasiones instintivas en un hombre; y estas reflexiones eran para la muchacha tanto más importantes, cuanto sabía que estaba profundamente enamorada" (p. 31).

Since people basically tend to think about women in terms of their femininity or sex appeal, the author makes clear Gracia is just one among many victims. Also apparent is the need for women to correct demeaning stereotypes and attitudes. Consequently, the author appeals to her women readers by using characters who employ the first person plural when commenting on their exploited condition: "En todas partes,-- prosiguió Zoila--debieran formarse estas asociaciones [de mujeres]; para poner fin a la desgraciada condición de las mujeres que creen que la feminidad es la carta credencial que les abre todos los ánimos; una mujer, por culta e inteligente que sea es, primero que nada, una expresión feminista¹⁴ de la vida y esto resulta siempre, desagradable y monótono y por eso, los hombres nos tienen aún como a objetos" (p. 47). Gracia quickly adds that men "son muy, pero muy vivos, para conseguir lo que se proponen; por eso nos hablan siempre de los encantos femeninos que no son tales para ellos, si no fuente de placer" (p. 48).

With regard to those who might suggest women have made gains in Ecuadorian society, particularly in education, the author cogently points out that, at times, apparent reforms merely make male abuses more subtle:

Gracia, en su calidad de mujer pensaba en que la Universidad es, ante todo, una agrupación de hombres tratando de aparecer como inteligentes, gracias a las disciplinas académicas y que si era permitido a una mujer seguir estudios superiores, este hecho sólo se debía a que consideran agradable oír a una mujercita espigando en la enramada selva de las catalogaciones del Derecho y la Sociología y, sobre todo, porque los alumnos necesitan coronar Señoritas en cada Asociación, durante las fiestas anuales del estudiantado. (p. 13)

Notwithstanding the novel's numerous feminist passages which severely attack the *macho*, Gracia defines happiness and fulfillment

in terms of being loved and respected by a man so as to become, ultimately, a mother: "Gracia, como mujer aspiraba, ante todo a recibir el amor como medio de mejoramiento personal, puesto que sentía una fruición intensa al presentir la maternidad" (p. 11). This attitude is not really surprising nor contradictory if one recalls the *marianista* orientation of Ecuadorian feminism, a notion that exalts motherhood. Unfortunately, however, love with respect is to elude Gracia who in a moment of deep loneliness perceives the chasm that exists between her dreams and reality:

. . . por que razones ha de luchar una mujer contra el destino si el de ella es en definitiva el mismo bajo cualesquiera circunstancias? Creer, engañarse, dejarse amar, aceptar el germen, cuidarlo y entregar a la vida un ser: y sentir, hondamente la pena de haber vivido sin mayores emociones superiores, con una ley impuesta, con las ideas simples que sobre "su honor" tiene el hombre; y a cambio de eso, como recompensa a la brutalidad del hombre--cumpliendo también su destino-- la lealtad, la lealtad. (pp. 60-61)

Consequently, Gracia's forlorn state of mind and urgent need for love make her vulnerable before Roberto, the ex-boyfriend, sealing her fate as a victim of carnal pleasure. Following a vain attempt to convince Roberto to marry her, especially since she was convinced "él la había mancillado y su obligación era dignificarla por el matrimonio" (p. 79), Gracia's tragedy is complete: abandoned, pregnant, and disgraced. In effect, the earlier illusions of motherhood and fulfillment turn into a nightmare--one which threatens to victimize all women who are not sufficiently strong or fortunate enough to resist men's false promises and self-interest.

Understanding the hopelessness of her situation, Gracia reveals her bitterness when reproaching God for having made women the victims of Creation:

Dios mío, cuánta alegría pusiste en el mundo y cuanto dolor a la vez . . . por qué nos hiciste tan frágiles a las mujeres y tan brutales a los hombres?

.
Aquí estamos Dios mío, yo que pequé y esta inocente hija que será la prolongación de mi calvario, dales más triunfos y alegrías a tus hijos dilectos, a los reyes de la creación, solázate Dios mío con las luchas infames de los hombres, llena el mundo con sus vicios y sus calumnias, puebla el universo con sus hijos mal'habidos, de la debilidad de las mujeres saca más fuerza para el delito. (p. 138)

In conclusion, *La pena fuimos nosotras* is the story about one woman who symbolizes the potential suffering and despair all women must be prepared to confront during life--whether it be the pain experienced during childbirth or the humiliation of merely being a source of male pleasure. With resignation and apparent defeat, Gracia explains: "siempre fuimos la pena honda, siempre amamos en el dolor, siempre fuimos la tristeza escondida para ser paz en la amargura del mundo" (pp. 138-139).

Although the feminist protest is not as emphatic as in *La pena fuimos nosotras*, Bertha de Izurieta's *Juventud inmolada*¹⁵ does stress the deplorable social consequences that arise when women are deceived by men. The author's chief concern is the problem of the abandoned and unwanted child who eventually becomes a juvenile delinquent and criminal. Throughout the work, Izurieta attacks Ecuadorian society for not understanding nor being sensitive enough to the deserted youth's plight: "¡Ingresaban [a la Casa Correccional de Menores] manos limpias de vicio y degeneración . . . sin un afecto que le redima, sin un ambiente purificador, huérfano del amor materno, al amparo del cual se han hecho vidas famosas, sembrando de nombres ilustres la historia. Carolos se iba a convertir en un ser degenerado e inconforme!" (p. 86).

As exemplified by Elena Dogam, the novel's female protagonist, one of the major causes of the aforementioned problem stems from man's belief that he can use women for his sexual adventures, and later, renounce all obligations and responsibilities that might arise. Naturally, the woman is the victim. In Elena's case, despite a successful career at school and all her aspirations of becoming a school teacher, she is willing to sacrifice everything for her first love, Patricio. However, after spending a year in the army, Patricio returns to Quito with new ideas regarding Elena and love:

En esta confusión sentimental se entregaba a Patricio Medina, justamente cuando en él ya no había ese recuerdo de antaño, . . . cuando ya no concebía que Elena podría ser su esposa, dada su miseria económica, . . . ¡¡¡Cuando había aprendido maliciosamente que la hombría se fragua en la inmolación moral de mujeres sinceras!!! [Ahora] Patricio estaba solamente atado a sus instintos brutales, . . . Elena como recompensa a sus instintos brutales, se inmolaba para siempre. (p. 60)

Elena becomes pregnant; obviously all is lost: she cannot return to school as an unwed mother. Society will no longer consider her chaste, and her life is now limited to a daily struggle for survival. The deep rooted suffering characteristic of women described in *La pena fuimos nosotras* is apparent in the reaction of Elena's mother who for years struggled and sacrificed for her daughter's education and future: "Todo estaba terminado, no había sino que seguir adelante en aquel camino que pronto habría de encontrar el final; así continuaba María su vida silenciosa, a veces llena de lágrimas, otras desfallecida, ya no podía enderezar sus fuerzas que las sentía perder día a día" (p. 64). With regard to Elena, she dies shortly after giving birth--alone and abandoned--leaving behind her son who never has a chance to develop into

a respectable citizen, capable of making positive contributions to society.

To appreciate fully the underlying feminism in *Juventud inmóvil*, it must be remembered that the problem of abandoned children, according to Ecuadorian feminists, is an issue directly linked to women's overall suffering and exploitation by men. Since motherhood is considered to be a woman's principal source of strength from which she can influence society by properly educating her children, any abuse of this institution may be likened to sacrilege. Therefore, the unwed or abandoned mother is stripped of her dignity and denied the opportunity to effectively raise her children because society does not provide her with adequate protection, facilities, and means (i.e., day care centers and alimony benefits) to accomplish her mission in life. In effect, just as in the case of Gracia (*La pena fuimos nosotras*), Elena's experience also reminds women of the ever present dangers inherent in a male-dominated society.

In *Lo que deja la tarde* Matilde de Ortega¹⁶ presents the feminist question in a light different from that of the two previously examined novels. By means of first person narration (intended to yield a psychological portrait of a female protagonist), Elsa María explains she is not in conflict with any one man, but rather with the many social conventions which stifle her growth as a human being. Because she is the daughter of very social-minded, bourgeois parents, Elsa María is expected to conform to a code of manners and etiquette befitting a lady of prudence and self-control: "Nunca he podido caminar, reír, hablar y menos jugar, sin que las monjas hayan encontrado en todo esto una marcada

tendencia hacia la indisciplina" (p. 29). In addition, she laments that her mother "no acepta aún muchas cosas que otras madres han aceptado ya como son el dejarme salir sola a la calle, ir a una función de moda al teatro o al cine, visitar a una amiga, etc. Si ella no puede acompañarme estoy obligada a ir con una sirvienta" (p. 28).

Reminiscent of Teresa de la Parra's María Eugenia (*Ifigenia*), Elsa María hopes to begin living her life as she sees fit upon being graduated from high school: "Por fin se acabó la infancia; ahora soy una mujer, una mujer como todas, con grandes anhelos y ambiciones, con deseos de gozar y de vivir; sobre todo de vivir!" (p. 27). Unlike her older sister, Inés, and consistent with the desire to *vivir*, Elsa María actively rebels against established standards and correctly perceives the major difference between the two sisters: "Inés no podría pensar en las cosas que yo pienso. Se escandalizaría, se asustaría al ver su pensamiento transportado a regiones prohibidas por mamá, por las monjas, por personas sensatas. Tendría que darse golpes de pecho para arrancar esas locuras y alucinaciones que se adueñan del corazón sin murallas, sin convencionalismos. ¿Por qué no se puede pensar libremente?" (pp. 78-79). More specifically, Elsa María comments that whereas Inés exemplifies obedience and discretion, "soy tan diferente a ella, pues para mí lo más esencial en este momento, es ser dueña de un lápiz de labios y esa ha sido la primera cosa que he comprado, para con su ayuda sentirme más mujer" (p. 31).

In effect, Elsa María recognizes her own qualities and rejects much of the lifestyle proposed by her grandmother, for example, archetype of the traditional woman in Ecuador:

¡Ah! ¡leer! Otra forma de estar ociosa. Deberías tejer o bordar, eso es femenino, la lectura es para los abogados o para los hombres de letras.

.....
A ningún hombre le gustaría oír de labios de una mujer esas ideas tontas. Debes saber, y una vez por todas te digo, que el sitio de la mujer está en la casa, no en las oficinas públicas ni en las cámaras.
(pp. 322-323)

With regard to marriage, the grandmother insists: "El hombre tiene muchas preocupaciones, por eso, la mujer no debe esperar nada ni menos exigirlo, por lo contrario, para que reine la armonía debe sacrificarse y olvidarse de sí misma" (p. 368)

Elsa María, of course, rejects the sacrificial role expected of women and replies emphatically to her grandmother: "Eso era en tu tiempo, ahora es diferente, pues tanto la mujer como el marido están en igualdad de condiciones y no tenemos por qué ser esclavas" (p. 368). Moreover, as she explained earlier in the novel: "Si me toca un mal marido, a los cinco minutos le entablo demanda de divorcio. No soy el tipo de mujer abnegada que tanto abunda en la familia" (pp. 206-207).

Nevertheless, despite her unorthodox ideas and vehement protests against many longstanding conventions, Elsa María does not challenge the basic role women are expected to fulfill (motherhood). In fact, she reveals her acceptance of the prevailing standards of Latin American womanhood (their appearance and their roles as wives and mothers)¹⁷ when she enthusiastically writes to her uncle:

Después de haber pasado todas estas pruebas [en el colegio], me siento un pozo de ciencia; verdad es que no soy sabia, pero para una mujer la educación recibida es suficiente, así dice mi madre y estoy de acuerdo con ella. Después de todo, para que quiero saber más, si mi única actividad en el futuro va a ser casarme y manejar una casa con muchos hijos. Porque tú debes saber, padrino, a esta hora, cuáles son mis intenciones para el futuro; casarme lo más pronto, ser una buena y abnegada ama de casa y tener doce hijos. (p. 32)

Consequently, among other things, *Lo que deja la tarde* is the story of a woman who desires greater freedoms within the traditional framework of female life in Ecuador. That is, rather than attack the *macho* abuses which result in female exploitation, Elsa María's feminist concerns are directed against those social mores which continually have denied women, especially young unmarried ones, the right to live as free adults.

Sangre en las manos by Laura Pérez de Oleas Zambrano¹⁸ deals specifically with abortion, a burning issue for all feminists. However, instead of stressing the need for legalized abortion which would give women greater control over their own bodies, the novel is directed against the immorality and sordidness of abortions in Quito. Each chapter presents a case study of the tragedies experienced by women who have allowed themselves to be a part of feticide; in general, the author unifies the narrative by centering all the episodes around one key figure--Estenia Germán, "la maga del aborto."

As might be expected, there is little concern for character development; Pérez de Oleas Zambrano instead makes a point of stating her views directly to the reader, and in effect, converts the work into a public platform of social protest. So there be no misunderstanding, she intrudes in the novel to explain that Estenia Germán is not the cause of the abortion problem which has victimized women from all social classes: "Si la guillotina o la silla eléctrica se aplicaran a la maga del aborto que es Estenia Germán, pronto sería reemplazada" (p. 209).

Naturally, continues the author, there are times when abortions should be permitted, and in fact, it is "hasta un deber en determinados

casos morales y en otros que la medicina señala como necesarios para la vida o salud de la madre" (p. 209). However, she quickly adds: "Lo que se debe condenar es el abuso. Que se haya hecho de la ciencia una cloaca de escape para la corrupción, que es explotada, muchas veces, por mujeres o profesionales que no son especialistas en esta rama de la cirugía" (p. 209).

Also, besides the death of the fetus and the physical dangers each mother confronts when having an illegal abortion, it is apparent the author is deeply concerned with the moral issue, particularly in terms of young women who might lose sight of their responsibilities and obligations as future mothers: "Y en lo que respecta a la ética social este abuso resulta nefasto, porque crea en las almas juveniles un falso concepto de la maternidad, viendo en el hijo tan sólo la consecuencia del placer; consecuencia de fácil desaparición y que motiva la ruptura del freno moral tan necesario a la mujer joven" (p. 209). Moreover, illegal abortion threatens to undermine the longstanding belief that marriage should be a major goal for women: "En la mentalidad de la niña que se acerca a la pubertad debe residir el conocimiento de su misión sexual Hay que señalarle su destino que es de compañera del hombre; pero mediante la formación de un hogar honrado. Que toda locura y concesión adelantada al solicitante, la apartan de la felicidad verdadera, que la joven sólo la obtiene en el matrimonio de amor" (pp. 210-211).

The solution to the abortion problem, according to the author, is basically society's total commitment to youth's moral edification:

Más amor al hijo. Más ética profesional. Más responsabilidad paternal. Más conciencia en el acto sexual hacen falta para que disminuya el exceso de abortos que va en mengua de la población ecuatoriana. Las bases de la educación juvenil deben ser de sólida moral y completo conocimiento de sus deberes. El muchacho desde los bancos del aula necesita saber que la circunstancia que le hizo nacer macho no le da derecho a canalladas. La sociedad no hace alto en sus deslices amorosos; pero esto no le autoriza a abandonar a una mujer que va a ser madre. . . . No se imagine que sólo la hembra debe llevar las consecuencias de un acto que lo hicieron en común. No es ella sola la responsable. (pp. 209-210)

In addition, with regard to women specifically: "La niña debe ser educada y preparada a que no sea fácil presa del hombre. . . . Se le debe formar de tal manera que no necesite del hombre en los vaivenes de la vida. Ella sola debe bastarse y ganarse el sustento. . . . Para que un revés de fortuna no la deje a merced del macho, siempre en acecho de la fémima que de él necesita" (p. 210).

Naturally, the novel's thesis would not be complete without exalting the positive qualities of a woman who is willing to accept her child, even though she has fallen prey to *machismo*. Gracia, therefore, symbolizes the supreme maternal sacrifice; she understands her chief role in life is to procreate, and despite having been raped she refuses to commit feticide while courageously accepting the challenge of being an unwed mother. With perhaps excessive emotion and zeal, Pérez de Oleas Zambrano writes:

Más no arroje sobre los leños a la víctima inocente: libre está ella de error y de pecado. . . .

Mujeres del mundo. Mujeres de América. . . . Mujeres ecuatorianas. Ved que ya Gracia alza la santa hostia del amor. Es la hora de la ofrenda propiciatoria. Ponéos de hinojes [sic] y adorad al niño que ahora es sangre y alma. . . . Que mañana será un fusil, . . . para rechazar al intruso. Dos brazos que arrojarán mil bombas al enemigo;

un cerebro que encontrará nuevos caminos a la ciencia, al progreso . . . y un corazón más para amar a la Patria y morir por ella . . .

Mujeres del mundo: de vuestras entrañas destrozadas, de vuestros vientres matirizados y deformados; de vuestros pezones abiertos manará la savia que henchirá de fortaleza a vuestra Patria. Vosotras sois las creadoras de Vida; las que formáis los ejércitos de defensa con el desgarramiento de vuestra carne; las que ofrendáis el fruto de amor y dolor sin esperar recompensa, cuando la Patria os lo pide; . . . porque una mujer-madre ama a todos los hijos del mundo.

Salve, mujeres fecundas. Salve, madres. Salve, madre ilegítima(p. 425)

In short, abortion is a threat to women because it frequently weakens their commitment to motherhood, and consequently, their major source of power in society--their means of contributing significantly to Ecuadorian development and growth--is whittled away until women's existence is rendered meaningless. It is before this danger that Pérez de Oleas Zambrano writes *Sangre en las manos*, hoping to convince women that abortion is more than feticide--it is suicide, at least in terms of their participatory role in society.

Up to this point, the novels discussed have revealed their feminist orientation by portraying women as victims of sexual exploitation and/or stifling social conventions, and above all, they have reaffirmed the essence of motherhood, a theme crucial to *marianista* thinking of the first half of the century. Another kind of feminist-related novel is the historical work which attempts to make women proud of their female heritage by studying the achievements of outstanding women of the past.¹⁹ A clear example of such a work is Raquel Verdesoto de Romo Dávila's *Manuela Sáenz*,²⁰ a biographical novel in which the dominant feminist concern centers around glorifying Sáenz as a key

revolutionary figure, who aside from being one of Bolívar's lovers, was supposedly instrumental in aiding the Liberator during the Independence period. Obviously, the two volume novel which deals with the years of actual fighting and the early Republic is an attempt to convince readers of Sáenz's heroism, and in turn, present a model from which women can draw strength and self-esteem.

At the outset, the author quickly describes Sáenz as a rebel and potential enemy of royalist authority: "Después Manuela tomará actitud de desafío frente a la sociedad, al despreciar sus convencionalismos" (I, 25). Later, the author adds: "pero al final siente odio por los realistas que sacrifican a tantos quiteños" (I, 36). Besides these characteristics, the reader learns that "Manuela ama la libertad" (I, 46), and above all, she resents Spanish occupation in America: "También medita que pertenece a una sociedad, a una cultura, a un mundo en donde un grupo de conquistadores tiene todos los derechos y otro se halla en condiciones deprimentes, sólo por haber nacido en suelo conquistado" (I, 52).

Naturally, the comments mentioned above are used in the novel to illustrate that Sáenz's love for Bolívar, and her subsequent separation from her husband, were not founded on sheer sexual desire, but rather arose from a kind of sublime attraction between two personalities that were dedicated to securing America's freedom. In fact, their love became a source of inspiration that led both heroes to greater heights: "En virtud de esta pasión, Bolívar tiene más brío, se siente mejor y más héroe. Manuela irradia más belleza, más atracción, ya que a diferencia de otros amores que anulan el ser, éste le hace sentirse fuerte, al

mismo tiempo humana y con capacidad de sacrificio" (I, 94). Furthermore, Sáenz's love for Bolívar heightened her interest in struggling for the principle of social justice: "El amor hacia Bolívar ha vuelto a Manuela más humana, ha limado prejuicios de clase social, y por eso siente alegría de codearse con mulatos y negros, ennoblecidos por una casaca militar" (I, 102-103).

Regarding Sáenz's actual role during Independence, the novel emphasizes both the close working relationship that existed between Sáenz and Bolívar and the influence she exercised during the period:

Manuela se ha constituido en la persona de mayor confianza para Bolívar; ella es la que en momentos de mucha labor permite o no las audiencias, y por sí misma resuelve algunos asuntos. . . . Manuela desempeña, con gran inteligencia, las funciones que se le encomiendan. Su trabajo lo realiza a conciencia, en carácter de archivadora celosa y suspicaz, no facilita originales de documentos Y para aquello de descubrir conspiraciones, Manuela resulta magnífica, con algún adecuado disfraz encuentra la pista de las celadas que acechan a Bolívar. (I, 158-159)

This same activity and intense involvement by Sáenz continued into the early years of the Republic, especially during the conflict between Peruvian and Gran Colombian interest groups: "Manuela queda en Lima, soportando los momentos difíciles de una nueva época en la política peruana. Manuela está resuelta a afrontar todas las dificultades que se le presenten, cuidará celosamente los intereses de Bolívar, que son los intereses de la libertad" (II, 27). In effect, "Manuela no solamente ayuda a vivir a Bolívar, en cuanto a su problema principal de organización de los pueblos colombianos y en la consolidación de su independencia, no, sino también a vivir su vida, a llevar la casa a prestar atenciones a sus allegados" (II, 59-60).

Generally speaking, then, *Manuela Sáenz* attempts to illustrate that rather than just having been another of Bolívar's lovers, Sáenz

was strongly committed to America's independence, and was a woman of high ideals who played a key role in the period's events. In this respect, the biographical novel is a feminist work which should be considered part of the ever-increasing literature that has tried to reevaluate women's contribution to history and other fields.

Although *La profesora*, *A noventa millas, solamente*, and *Yoimar*²¹ are not feminist or protest novels per se, they too provide important commentaries and descriptions of women's conditions in Ecuadorian society. For example, Enriqueta Velasco's *La profesora* deals with the problems rural teachers must confront (i.e., insufficient funds, materials, and public support), and more specifically, it reveals how local political bosses oppose quality teachers who threaten existing power structures by effectively educating the people. As might be expected, it is the female teacher who suffers most since she cannot defend herself against the frequent physical abuses inflicted upon her by provincial authorities: "En tanto, el Gamonal, el que engañó, el que mintió y destrozó una vida [la de una mujer], es respetado y considerado por todos, su carcajada se escucha en los salones de la Sociedad y continúa como ave de mal augurio de casa en casa, en busca de una nueva víctima . . .!" (p. 32). Moreover, it is made painfully clear that many women instructors must accept sexual advances so that they do not lose their teaching positions which are controlled by local officials.

Eugenia Viteri's *A noventa millas, solamente* is a Cuban political novel that nonetheless succeeds in presenting some idea of women's situation in Ecuadorian society, even though the latter theme is a secondary aspect of the work. Basically, Viteri tells the story about Elisa, a Cuban girl who is uprooted from her country when her parents

decide they would rather live in Miami than in Castro Cuba. Throughout the novel, Elisa observes the humiliation and decay suffered by Miami Cubans, and gradually she recognizes the need to return to her homeland: "Se hundió tía igual que todos. Huyeron creyendo encontrar la solución, descubrir un camino y se equivocaron. ¡Vinieron por ideales! Aquel sistema no les gustaba, se decían demócratas. ¡Democracia y libertad, cuánta mugre escondes!" (p. 53). More specifically, Viteri explains:

Pensé luego que junto a los que dejaban su país por su propia voluntad, irían niños, adolescentes a quienes no se les consultaba y si tal ocurría, era a medias, sin esperar su opinión. Me ubiqué en el caso de la adolescente que amaba su tierra, sentía hondo sus raíces, vivencias, amistades, paisaje y como ella, digo concretamente, Elisa, no quiso salir. Cuando maduró, se hizo mujer, pensó en volver a lo suyo para dejar de ser una extranjerilla cualquiera en un mundo que estuvo a punto de ahogarla por su inexperiencia y desconocimiento de ese "mundo" tan diferente del suyo. Entonces volver, volver, volver fue su mejor sueño.²²

With regard to the portrayal of women in the novel, the reader encounters Berta, an archetype of the traditional female whose life centers around pleasing the men in her life (i.e., husband and sons):

Berta maneja el hogar, sabe de sus problemas y los resuelve. Berta es de aquellos seres que son felices trabajando para otros. Mas, si los otros son su marido y su hijo. Además de cocinar, fregar pisos, vajillas, realiza trabajos extras. Su naturaleza, su humanidad sana, robusta no conoce el cansancio. Y ni su marido ni su hijo han tenido tiempo de enterarse que trabaja demasiado. La quieren, se saben mimados y la explotan dulce, pacientemente, abusando del amor de esta mujer fuerte. No conciben que debe trabajar menos. Si se quejara, si protestara . . . no hay tiempo y es feliz preparándoles sus comidas, prodigándoles cuidados. (p. 131)

Obviously, Berta's brief appearance in the novel serves as a concrete example of women's abnegation and silent suffering, a reminder of the limited social and domestic roles traditionally open to women.

Overt feminist protest does appear momentarily in the novel when Olga María explains she is a prostitute because marriage would deny her freedom: "-¿Casarme yo? ¡Qué va! . . . [Es que] si tú intentas divertirme un poquito con otros, no averigües cómo vas a morir, ni si los rusos serán los primeros en curar el cáncer, porque de seguro, no tendrás tiempo de saberlo, ni de contraer dicho mal. Partes rumbo al cementerio con unas cuantas balas en tu pellejito suelto. Te consideran de su propiedad particular, de exclusivo uso doméstico y yo querida, mía, entiendo el amor a mi manera" (p. 88).

At another point, Lilí de Rodríguez talks about the frustration and despair of being relegated to an anonymous source of man's sexual pleasure:

Demostrarle al mundo que eres distinta, que en tí [sic] hay algo más que en cuerpo bien formado, que gustas de meditar, que amas la belleza, que sientes el amor como algo profundo, eterno, no es sencillo. Luego, cuando conquistas respeto y surges limpia . . . descubres que el objeto de tu amor, el hombre de tu vida, pertenece a la escala de machos inquietos, susceptible de enredarse con Nelly Ceresuave y sus hijas. Lola, Meche Matahari, María Josefina, Jacqueline, Fresia,-- la relegada de toda la vida--y mil mujeres más . . . observas tu cuerpo y sientes tu sangre manchada y es como si en tus olores se confundieran los de todas esas aves taciturnas, criaturas angustiadas, muñecas de amargo destino. (pp. 120-121)

However, the most significant element in the novel, at least in terms of women role-models, is that Elisa is presented as a revolutionary figure capable of making important and difficult decisions (i.e., return to Cuba) after serious thought. She is one of the few female protagonists created by Ecuadorian women novelists that is neither mainly concerned with motherhood nor basically involved in some romance which links her destiny directly to a man. In effect, Elisa is defined in terms of

being a patriot rather than a traditional woman who usually has been considered servile and dependent upon male support. In a conversation with her younger sister, Elisa's strength of character and mind is clearly revealed:

-¡Elisa . . . !
 -¿Qué te preocupa, dime, Clarita?
 -¿Qué es la vida?
 -. . . Una . . . una . . . etapa, un ciclo. Se nace,
 se vive y se muere.
 -¡Todos!
 -¡Absolutamente!

 -¿Se puede escoger la muerte, Elisita?
 -Sí. Se la hace, se la escoge.
 -¿Y por qué, pues?
 -Por ideales y por amor a nuestros semejantes.
 -¡Amor, ¿cómo amor? [sic]
 -A través de las ciencias que permite [sic] salvar vidas,
 prolongarlas. Las artes proporcionan éxtasis, gozo, plenitud,
 recreación. Las luchas políticas por construir sociedades
 nuevas.
 -Elisa, quiero ser como tú, sabes tanto.
 -No, no. Tú tienes que saber más y ser mejor. (pp. 158-159)

It is interesting that Clarita admires her sister because of Elisa's intelligence and apparent understanding of the complex questions discussed in the above citation. In a manner of speaking, Viteri, knowingly or not, has created an alternative role-model which suggests women are capable of distinguishing themselves outside of the mother or sex object contexts. Clearly, Elisa is a dynamic woman totally committed to the Cuban revolution:

--¿Tomarás tú un fusil, Elisa? ¡Vamos di!
 --¡Sí!
 --¿Tú serás capaz de matar?
 --Para tener derecho a una mesa limpia, a una
 vida honesta, sí. (p. 179)

Just as in the case of *A noventa millas, solamente*, Mireya de Insua's novel, *Yoimar*, not only reflects some of the problems experienced

by Ecuadorian women, but also presents a protagonist who seems to imply that a new pattern of behavior is opening up for women. With respect to the traditional female-male relationships, the author immediately points out that Yoimar has had to struggle against numerous *macho* advances: "Era ya parte de su naturaleza errar por los empleos, de los cuales salía siempre víctima . . . de la [sic] morbosas intenciones de los hombres" (p. 2). Moreover, after arriving in Quito and being warned "que se cuidara de los hombres de la capital" (p. 5), Yoimar (fifteen years old) is almost raped by her employer.

Although this concern over male abuses sounds very much like the author's first novel, *La pena fuimos nosotras*, a radical change in the protagonist's concept of sex gradually develops--she enjoys sex for herself and recognizes that her instincts are stronger than traditional moral teachings: "Creyó que era dueña absoluta de su persona y que podría dominar su instinto. Los hechos ocurridos demostraron lo contrario. No era invulnerable a los llamados de la pasión o del amor, llámese como se llamase esta manifestación física o sentimental" (p. 48). Later, one reads: "Un desvanecimiento y deseos de entregarse la dominó por completo. No opuso resistencia. Sintió un placer endemoniado al oír jadear al muchacho estrafalario" (p. 53).

The most interesting part of Yoimar and her attitude toward sex is that despite her sensuality, which exists for herself rather than for her male partners, she is described as being a *good* person: she becomes a nurse because of her interest in helping others; she is intelligent and constantly strives to improve herself; she is conscientious, hard-working, and dependable. According to Fernando, Yoimar's wealthy

fiancé: "--Esta criatura es impresionante-- ¿Dónde saca esa natural distinción y elegancia y esa manera de expresarse tan honda y filosófica, tan nítida y encantadora? Debe ser algo ancestral en ella pues no ha tenido ni el ambiente, ni el tiempo suficiente para adquirir tanta cultura siendo tan joven . . ." (p. 82). In effect, Yoimar is not a prostitute nor a libertine; she is as worthy of respect and sympathy as those reputable men who are not obliged to suppress their sexual instincts.

Notwithstanding the author's apparent challenge of traditional sex roles, however, the novel points out that Yoimar's intimate relations with Fernando and Mario are misinterpreted to mean that she has given up her freedom. Fernando comments: "queridita mía, yo sabré protegerte y honrarte . . . pero eso sí, desde hoy en adelante, tú serás sólo mía" (p. 54). Further on in the text, Mario explains that Yoimar belongs only to him:

--Te estaba esperando . . .
 --¿Con qué derecho?
 --Con el que me has dado dos veces . . .
 --Nada te da derecho a esperarme o espiarme como
 si fuera algo tuyo . . .
 --¿Y no lo eres? (p. 59)

After Yoimar tells Mario she is to marry Fernando:

--¿Casarte? Mira chiquita yo no lo permitiré.

 --¿Y quién eres tú para permitir o no lo que yo
 decida hacer?
 --Soy tu dueño. (pp. 59-60)

Despite the various technical weaknesses (poor character development, melodramatic scenes, a hurried ending), *Yoimar* is a provocative novel because it suggests women's attitudes toward sex are evolving

in Ecuador. For, not only Yoimar's ideas, but Carla's as well imply a shift in sexual mores:

Carla era fantástica. Desprejuiciada, amoral, alegre, charlona y coquetera, era más carne que espíritu.

El caso típico de la mujer puramente hembra, astuta y calculadora. Tenía tres amantes. El uno le daba dinero. El segundo le hacía feliz sexualmente y el otro era el candidato seguro para el matrimonio. Sabía combinar tan bien las entrevistas, que ninguno sospechaba de la existencia del otro. Tenía siempre lista una respuesta o una disculpa que la librara fácilmente de cualquier aprieto. (p. 39)

If this novel is taken to represent the rise of new women's sexual attitudes, then it is likely the near future will reveal more clearly an interesting conflict between the sexes in Ecuador.

To date, *Bruna, soroche y los tíos* by Alicia Yáñez Cossío is the most important novel to have been written by an Ecuadorian woman, and in fact, it is perhaps one of the principal narrative works in Ecuadorian contemporary fiction.²³ Unlike the novels discussed above, Yáñez avoids limiting her focus to a specific feminist problem or an isolated story of one individual. Instead, she presents a total vision of Ecuadorian reality from the Conquest to the present. The kaleidoscopic view is presented in a fashion similar to that of *Cien años de soledad*. And, like García Márquez, Yáñez moves from the particular to the universal by superimposing on one family society's experiences and conflicts.²⁴ In effect, the novel's characters are archetypes that embody significant trends and concepts found throughout Ecuadorian history (i.e., the importance of Spanish heritage, contempt for those of Indian lineage, strong reaction against change and outside influences, Church domination).

Generally speaking, the novel is composed of three parts: (1) a prologue that refers to Bruna's successful escape from her *soroche*-ridden city, (2) thirty-three chapters which narrate the development of Bruna's family, and (3) an epilogue which is a reaffirmation of Bruna's having freed herself from a world that continues to live in the past. The importance of the novel's structure is that it convincingly combines Ecuadorian and universal reality by juxtaposing a contemporary figure's struggle against the Establishment with a series of episodes and events that readily recreate a specific historical and geographic context. Consequently, much of the work's value comes from its having made possible multiple interpretations that appeal to a broad range of interests. For example, some readers may associate Bruna's struggle against established social structures with that of the international youth movements characteristic of the 1960's; others may see in Bruna the struggle of one individual against a dominant society; or, there may be those who prefer to consider the novel strictly in terms of Ecuadorian reality.

For the purposes of this study, *Bruna, soroche y los tíos* is essential because it is narrated by a young woman whose rebellion and rejection of conventions are strongly tied to her womanhood: "Consciente de que la vida era el supremo don que podía tener y por el cual valía la pena hacerse todas las magulladuras posibles. Si se vivía una sola y única vez era necesario sentirse plenamente ser humano, persona, mujer" (p. 347). Moreover, Yáñez presents several female archetypes which in addition to revealing Bruna's family origins also serve as a kind of historical summary of the confining roles that traditionally

have been available to women, and against which Bruna rebels. When referring to one of Bruna's ancestors, Yáñez explains:

Las viudas no tenían otra alternativa que seguir dócilmente a sus maridos hasta la muerte, de la misma manera que lo habían hecho en vida. Las mujeres no tenían ningún tipo de instrucción, no se les permitía ni hojear un libro por temor de que se hicieran hombrunas. Sólo podían tener contactos con la aguja, la escoba y las ollas. Cuando sus pensamientos se atrevían a ir más allá de los aleros de sus tejidos, eran causa de escándalo y ellas mismas se reprimían, porque creían que obraban mal. Estaban imposibilitadas de hacer ningún otro movimiento que no hubieran hecho antes sus madres y sus abuelas. Las mujeres eran unos ovarios gigantescos, vestidos de negro, donde se gestaban hijos en serie y supersticiones en masa. (pp. 76-77)

Further on, the author refers to the tragic consequences of women's longstanding submissiveness and passivity: "Dentro de la familia de Bruna, las mujeres--a excepción de Camelia Llorosa que se independizó de ambiente--todas fueron víctimas, o juguetes de las circunstancias, por la cobardía que las mantuvo atadas a los hombres y por el egoísmo de ellos, que nunca quisieron soltarles de la mano" (pp. 139-140).

The two major characters who best illustrate the frustration and futility of traditional female roles are Bruna's aunts, Clarita and Catalina ("caca de gallina"). The former is the typical spinster figure that laments her solitude while resigning herself to a "larga y triste soltería en la que los gatos desempeñarían las veces de hijos, y las hojas de geranios, la de pañales tenidos a secarse en las macetas del patio. Comprendió que le estaba vedado para siempre el camino prohibido que conducía al beso" (p. 301). As for Catalina, she is the pious woman who spends her entire life praying and crusading for greater morality:

Consideró que su nacimiento era en función expiatoria, y fiel a su destino, se dedicó a purgar las faltas propias y ajenas, subiendo y bajando todos los días de los cielos a los infiernos y suspirando por una silla gestatoria, hecha a su medida, y que tuviera el poder volátil de las escobas de las brujas para poder inspeccionar lo que hacían los habitantes de la ciudad, y sacar su cara arrugada por el bien común. Si tía Catalina hubiera vivido unos años más tarde no había parado hasta conseguir que la nombraran censura de espectáculos públicos
(p. 223)

Clearly, the tragedy of these two women is their not having lived full lives characterized by a broad range of experiences. On the one hand, because she adheres to her older sister's social prejudices, Clarita refuses many marriage proposals, and in the process, confines herself to the lonely and unfulfilled world of spinsterhood repressing forever her capacity to love and be loved: "Llevó su soledad con entereza y elegancia espiritual, sin quejumbamientos, ni posturas de víctima, como si en el fondo de ella misma se sintiera culpable de no haber mandado al diablo a su hermana cuando aún era tiempo de hacerlo" (p. 305). On the other hand, Catalina loses herself in religious fanaticism and forgets about the positive aspects of human life: "Tía Catalina se incapacitaba cada día más para toda actividad que no fuera la relacionada con las indulgencias. Cada vez estaba más agria y toleraba menos a los sobrinos" (p. 229). In effect, both women reflect the kind of lifestyle that is intolerable to Bruna, a young woman who is struggling to experience her total humanity.

Of course, to "sentirse plenamente ser humano, persona, mujer," one must understand completely the obstacles in life/society that deny freedom and creativity, and then, actively rebel against those barriers. Bruna recognizes the double standards that offer men unlimited opportunities

to move about and experiment in life while relegating women to the home. After Bruna's brother (Gabriel) decides to study in Paris she laments: "Un chico puede ir a París, o al fin del mundo. No tiene una virginidad que cuidar, ha nacido con el privilegio de ser hombre. Mientras ella no puede ir sola del colegio a la casa que dista pocas cuerdas. Ha nacido con el estigma de ser mujer, está condenada al 'ghetto.' Contra su virginidad atentan los que pasan por su lado, los pájaros que están parados en los alambres de la luz, los árboles con sus brazos alargados, los montes cuando hacen sus juegos de luces y juegan al escondite, el arco-iris y todas las personas . . ." (p. 248). It is apparent Bruna understands that society's insistence on protecting women's virginity--conserving their purity--has condemned her to second-rate status. She reveals her envy and dissatisfaction with this *status quo* when she refers to the "privilegio de ser hombres," as opposed to "el estigma de ser mujer."

Bruna expresses an aversion to conventional sexual patterns, and moreover, she manifests her own radical thinking on the matter: "Si supiera que no me van a dar una paliza, andaría desnuda por la huerta. . . . ¡Estoy harta hasta la coronilla de tanto rezo!" (p. 256).

In addition, Yáñez writes:

Las ropas con que andaba cubierta la llenaban de vergüenza. No era partidaria del nudismo, pero pensaba que a la humanidad le hacía falta caminar un trecho bastante largo todavía para liberarse de prejuicios y de la carga de convencionalismos que afeaban la dignidad humana y hacían aborrecer, sin saber por qué la belleza de un cuerpo adolescente . . . Habría menos malicia--pensaba--cuando las partes sexuales no fueran ni más, ni menos que los dedos y la cara. Se debía aspirar a que, cuando un hombre se encontrara con una mujer desnuda, no se la quedara mirando con la boca abierta, ni que sus pensamientos hicieran con los ojos la metamorfosis de una cama de lo que

era una mesa . . . Y una mujer, al encontrarse con un hombre en las mismas condiciones, no debía huir, ni sentir incomodidad alguna.

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La cumbre de la civilización debería ser que cada uno viviera su propia vida como le viniera en gana. (pp. 256-257)

Due to this spirit of rebelliousness and antagonism for social customs that have hindered women's development, it is logical that Bruna relates to the lives and experiences of María Illacatus, Camelia Llorosa, and "la jovencita bailarina," the three women who to varying degrees challenge the *status quo* during the course of the novel. In the first case, María Illacatus is Bruna's great-great-grandmother who represents the family's beginning: she is the wealthy Indian princess captured by a Spanish conqueror in search of riches. More importantly, however, as a woman, María symbolizes the ultimate tragedy of the Conquest: "Y la más profunda escencia de ese drama, estuvo formada por el dolor y la vergüenza de la mujer india. Fue ella la víctima propiciatoria para aquellos semidioses barbados, monstruosos y magníficos."²⁵ Yáñez explains how María was forced to abandon her culture and traditions in order to become a Spanish lady; even the family portrait attempted to deny her identity:

Estaba vestida como una gran dama a raíz de su desdichado matrimonio. Quien hizo el cuadro, . . . influido por los convencionalismos de la época, le quitó la piel que tenía, y así desollada, la puso en carne viva la piel que le presentó el marido para que posara. María Illacatus perdió la piel cobriza en el lienzo con el mismo estoicismo con que perdió su razón de existir. . . . Era la imagen de lo que quisieron que ella hubiera sido. (pp. 36-37)

In short, María is presented as the first victim of the family--she is raped, and she is expected to conform to an image and lifestyle

imposed upon her by a conquering society. However, María does not submit completely:

Pero entre ella y el hombre blanco se interpuso una muralla de silencio, detrás de la cual, le llegaban como piedras el desprecio y la burla de la gente blanca, a los que ella correspondía encerrándose en su concha, negándose a coger el tenedor para llevarse los alimentos a la boca, resistiéndose a aprender todas las cosas nuevas que le eran impuestas. Se mantuvo impermeable a ciertas acciones que le parecían ritos absurdos, como manejar el abanico para despejar el rubor, o sentarse frente al bastidor metiendo y sacando la aguja para poner en la tela unas flores que se sentían prisioneras como ella . . . (p. 44)

Interestingly enough, after studying the family portrait, Bruna succeeds in perceiving María's spirit of silent defiance: "Las venas azuladas del puño derecho demostraban una rebeldía soterrada, una audacia en potencia de quien era casi una niña por la edad y el abandono en que la hicieron vivir" (p. 38). Also, it becomes obvious Bruna understands María's suffering; she identifies with her ancestor's loneliness and oppression, and consequently, there arises a strong bond of solidarity between the two, at least in Bruna's imagination: "A Bruna le dolió siempre el ver a su antecesora india clavada en el salón de las visitas, aislada de todo afecto y referencia por un muro de silencio y de palabras equívocas. . . . Hubiera querido llevarse el gran cuadro, colocarlo a la cabecera de su cama, para sacar a la abuela del recuerdo y darle el calor que no tuvo en vida" (p. 50).

Thus, whereas Bruna pities Clarita and Catalina, recognizing the void in their lives, she respects and admires her great-great-grandmother's courage and steadfast resistance against being completely absorbed by a foreign culture and a *macho* husband. Moreover, Bruna is deeply attracted to María because she understands that her ancestor's affliction

is not only that of an Indian, but also that of a woman. Significantly, María murders her husband/conqueror only after realizing he has stolen her children, a direct affront against her condition as mother/woman: "Pero se llevó la sangre de María Illacatu [sic] al quitarle los hijos. . . . Al besar a los hijos para despedirles, puso a cada uno, debajo de la camisa, un pedazo de su alma recién llegada" (pp. 45-46). Later, María "vio que sus hijos habían perdido lo que ella les puso debajo de la camisa . . . y sacando unas afiladas tijeras las clavó en el corazón del hombre" (p. 47). In effect, María Illacatus symbolizes two essential things: (1) the Conquest, from the point of view of a physical and cultural *violación*; and (2) the dignity and valor of which women are capable when oppressed.

Bruna's other ancestor with whom she clearly relates is her great aunt, Camelia Llorosa, the first woman to have escaped temporarily from the *soroche* confines of the family's city. According to the narrative, Camelia's parents arranged for her to marry a Spanish nobleman so they could benefit from the fiancé's nobility while he received the advantages of their wealth. Consistent with the dictates of tradition: "El parecer de la niña no fue consultado porque se sabía de antemano que lo mejor que podía sucederle a una mujer era unir su destino y su cuerpo al de un noble" (p. 88). Unfortunately, by the time Camelia reached Spain to join her husband he had already died of old age.

Nevertheless, her trip to Europe was not a total loss since she did experience a kind of intellectual and cultural awakening. Whereas before leaving home "Carmela no pensó nunca en rebelarse, por entonces estaba incapacitada para autodeterminarse por sí misma, los

principios con los cuales había nacido estaban fuertemente adheridos al sexo, . . ." (p. 90), after living abroad and meeting new people "hizo el gran descubrimiento de que la educación que le habían dado era absurda: la mujer podía vivir al margen del 'ghetto' y tenía unas insospechadas posibilidades que debían ser explotadas sin que sucediera ninguna catástrofe. . . . Se hizo mujer entera, absoluta, dueña de sus decisiones y de sus actos" (p. 94).

During her return to the "ciudad dormida," it is clear Camelia has undergone a total metamorphosis while in Europe: "ya no se trataba de la novia delicada que debía hacer el viaje a lomo de tortuga, sino de la mujer que podía competir físicamente con los robustos arrieros y sicológicamente poner a raya a una partida de maleantes con la fuerza de su dialéctica" (p. 97). Moreover, after arriving home she becomes the dominant figure in society: "La hegemonía de Camelia Llorosa llegó hasta el extremo de constituirse en el oráculo de la política: mantenía una copiosa correspondencia con todos los expatriados e insurrectos desterrados; se entretenía en avivar y sofocar cuartelazos y rebeliones, según estuviera su genio. En sus tertulias literarias se conspiraba en grande escala, se derrocaban gobiernos y se fraguaban revoluciones, como si se tratara de un pasatiempo con que mitigar el sopor de las horas muertas" (pp. 106-107).

However, despite Camelia's worldly knowledge and her unquestionable social influence, it is only a matter of time before she succumbs to the deadening effects of the *soroche*. Showing unusually poor judgment, she begins her fall by marrying the most inept of her suitors, and consequently, Yáñez points out: "Empezaban los primeros síntomas visibles del soroche, tenía una venda de cemento puesta sobre los ojos" (p. 109). In short,

Camelia lets herself be deceived by the false promises of a fifty-year-old man who is sexually impotent, and hence, for the second time her illusions of motherhood and marriage are destroyed. As a reaction to her humiliation and sorrow, she withdraws to a convent and never forgives herself for "haberse dejado engañar por un hombrecillo insignificante" (p. 120).

To recapitulate, María (courageous rebel) and Camelia (worldly intellectual) reflect women's potential qualities, and despite their final tragedies (María's suicide and Camelia's humiliation), they offer Bruna some idea of possible alternative role-models. But, before Bruna can break away completely from the conventional social patterns she must convince herself that rebellion will lead to freedom and happiness rather than frustration. At this point, she meets "la jovencita bailarina," Bruna's sister-in-law who has managed to escape successfully from the stifling traditions characteristic of the world that lies beyond "la ciudad dormida," and consequently, Yáñez explains: "Bruna ya no era una niña, desde entonces sintió que no estaba tan sola en el mundo, y fue poco a poco vertiendo sus ideas en palabras que sacaban de quicio a los parientes; fue rumiando poco a poco un plan de vida, sabiendo que en otros lugares existía la posibilidad de que sus pensamientos fueran reales y no repicaran a escándalo" (p. 256).

Clearly, from a feminist point of view, *Bruna, soroche y los tíos* is an extremely important work for three reasons: (1) it illustrates many of the restrictions and injustices women have suffered (women as victims); (2) it illustrates the valiant attempts made by some women to challenge stereotypes and social prejudices (women as rebels); and (3)

it proves women can struggle for their freedom and be successful (women as complete human beings). Moreover, whereas most of the other novels written by women have concentrated on presenting female characters as victims who never realize their aspirations nor their potential (i.e., Lola, Gracia, Elena, Elsa María, Yoimar), *Bruna, soroche y los tíos* offers the reader a positive sense of feminine identity by creating a protagonist who is capable of being victorious in her struggle to live fully: "Se independizó del recuerdo porque necesitaba equilibrio para su vida, mediante una lucha ardua y tenaz de la que salió magullada y dolorida, pero al final íntegra y contenta de sí misma" (p. 347). In effect, the novel represents a high point in Ecuadorian feminist fiction because it offers female readers a literary model to emulate at a time when "women who are re-examining their lives may . . . depend on literature to introduce new possibilities and to help them evaluate the alternatives open to them."²⁶

Generally speaking, then, with the exception of the remaining three novels which do not offer any significant feminist-related material (*Hambre rubia*, *La casa de tía Berta*, and *Verónica: Historia de amor*),²⁷ most of the works present a specific image of women in society, and frequently they constitute a protest against the injustices suffered by the female sector in Ecuador. In addition, while much of the literature is of questionable artistic quality, it must be remembered that the novels are historically significant because they represent women's initial attempt at writing novels; and for the most part, as social documents they move the reader closer to understanding some of women's major concerns. Their stylistic, structural, or aesthetic deficiencies cannot be separated

from their pioneering social mission as Angelina Gatell has noted:

Indudablemente, la mujer ha hecho mucha mala literatura, tanto epistolar como de otros géneros. Pero hay que tener en cuenta que la literatura ha sido para la mujer algo así como una rebelión, como una forma de manifestarse. . . . Y ha habido mucha mujer que se ha agarrado al bolígrafo, así, como a una tabla de salvación. Y ha dicho: yo tengo que escribir porque si no escribo estoy perdida. Y ello sin tener la más mínima vocación ni el más indispensable talento literario. Sí, existe una pléyade de señoras que no son escritoras; son inconformistas nada más. Por eso creo que parte de esa mala literatura que ha desprestigiado y ha contribuido a esa discriminación entre mujer y hombre escritores, se debe precisamente a esto: a que la mujer ha empleado la literatura como un medio de liberación. No como un medio de expresarse, sino como un medio de liberarse y de enfrentarse incluso con el hombre.

Notes
Chapter V

¹Quito: Imprenta del Ministerio de Educación, 1940. This novel was written in 1937.

²This study does not include Elsa Katz, Zoraida Maechler, and Lastenia Larriva de Llona because they are naturalized citizens of Ecuador, educated and raised in foreign countries.

³Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1969.

⁴Taped interview with the author; Quito, March 13, 1975.

⁵Cheri Register, "American Feminist Literary Criticism: A Bibliographical Introduction," *Feminist Literary Criticism: Explorations in Theory*, ed. Josephine Donovan (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1975), p. 19.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷*En la paz del campo; Purificación* (Quito: Talleres Gráficas del Ministerio de Educación, 1942); and *Luz en la noche* (Ambato: Imprenta de Educación Primaria, 1950). It should be pointed out that her father was one of Ecuador's major novelists of this century, Luis A. Martínez, who published *A la costa* (1904).

⁸*La novela ecuatoriana*, p. 218.

⁹Cited from Blanca Martínez de Tinajero, *Contestación a una crítica* (Ambato: Editorial Atenas, 1960), pp. 14-15.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

¹²Whether or not the author was originally conscious of the novel's potential explosiveness is of little importance here, particularly since she did defend her right of expression by eventually publishing the work.

¹³Guayaquil: Imprenta Municipal, 1953.

¹⁴The author is apparently not using *feminista* to mean feminist, but rather feminine or female.

¹⁵Quito: Editorial "Minerva," 1954.

¹⁶Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1955.

¹⁷The importance of these traditional roles for Latin American women is clearly pointed out in Susan A. Soeiro, "Recent Work on Latin American Women: A Review Essay," *Journal of Interamerican*

Studies and World Affairs, XVII, 4 (November 1975), 497-516. This article was part of a collection of eight scholarly studies on Latin American women, edited by Ann Pescatello and published in the November 1975 issue of the cited journal.

¹⁸Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1959.

¹⁹As pointed out by Susan Soeiro ("Recent Work on Latin American Women: A Review Essay," p. 498), the problem with the historical and biographical studies of individual women is that "they bypass the crucial issue of the ordinary female's role in society," and thus offer little understanding of women, in general.

²⁰2 vols. (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1963).

²¹Enriqueta Velasco de Batallas, *La profesora* (Latacunga: Editorial Cotopaxi, 1965); Mireya de Insua, *Yoimar* (Guayaquil: n.p., 1974). It should be noted that Mireya de Insua is the same author who wrote *La pena fuimos nosotras* (Mireya de Bravomalo), however, since her first novel she has remarried. Also, *Yoimar* was published at the author's expense; she contracted a Mr. Altamirano, employee of ZEA Printers, who rented the machinery at ZEA.

²²Taped interview with the author; Quito, March 13, 1975. Viteri visited Havana in 1961; she has not been to the USA. It should be noted that much of the novel is autobiographical, and therefore, many of the episodes and secondary characters present Ecuadorian reality and not that of Cuba or Miami.

²³Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1973. In 1972, the novel received the "Premio Unico Nacional de Novela," sponsored by the *El Universo* newspaper of Guayaquil.

²⁴The novel loses much of its impact because of the many similarities to *Cien años de soledad* (i.e., a sleepy city, a story about one family, episode of insomnia, the bishop's children that are *numbered*, the combining of reality and absurdity). Nevertheless, Yáñez has said the similarities are pure coincidence since her novel was near completion when García Márquez published *Cien años de soledad*.

²⁵Piedad Larrea Borja, "Biografía de la mujer en el Ecuador," *Ensayos*, pp. 59-60.

²⁶Cheri Register, "American Feminist Literary Criticism: A Bibliographical Introduction," pp. 20-21.

²⁷Nelly Espinoza de Orellana, *Hambre rubia* (Mexico: Libro MEX Editores, 1959); Ana María Iza, *La casa de tía Berta* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1974); Zoila María Castro, *Verónica: Historia de un amor* (New York: UNIDA Printing Corporation, 1975). *Hambre rubia* was selected for first prize in the Certamen Literario Internacional del "Círculo de Escritores y Poetas Iberoamericanos," on November 22,

1958 in New York. Basically, the work deals with a Latin American (Ecuadorian) woman's experiences in the USA, and her gradual understanding of this country's lifestyle.

²⁸Cited from a published round-table discussion: Jacinto López Gorge, "¿Existe una literatura específicamente femenina?," *La Estafeta Literaria*, 501 (October 1, 1972), 17.

CHAPTER VI

SHORT STORY

Unlike the novel, the short story has a relatively long tradition among Ecuadorian women writers, primarily because it has always been easier to publish the shorter pieces of fiction in journals and newspapers. The earliest of these published works date back to the late nineteenth century: "Paulina (Impresiones y recuerdos)" (1889), and "El eterno Don Juan" (1895)¹--two sentimental love stories solely concerned with entertaining the readers. In addition, according to Morayma Ofyr Carvajal, the first woman short story writer in Ecuador was Elisa Ayala González (1879-?), a *costeña* who portrayed the superstitions and folklore of the coastal peoples: "Buceó en el alma y la tradición popular, extremadamente rica en el litoral, en el ambiente montuvio supersticioso y encontró motivos permanentes para su fantasía y entregó un aporte magnífico a la literatura del Ecuador y del Continente."²

Curiously enough, Ayala González was read abroad before Ecuadorians knew of her; she wrote for such foreign journals as *Nubes Rosadas* and *La Revista Argentina* (Argentina), *Sucesos* and *El Nacional* (Chile), *Adelante* (Uruguay), *Hero* and *Cosmos* (Cuba). During the early years of this century, her short story "La procesión de las ánimas" earned first prize in the "Concurso Internacional Abierto en España," sponsored by *La Voz de Valencia*.³ Moreover, in "Homenaje a Elisa Ayala González,"

published in 1918 by the feminist magazine, *Flora*, one learns that she did not begin to publish her work in Ecuador until 1916, twenty-two years after her first story, "La malidición," was published by *América* in New York.⁴

Besides these early writers, numerous other women throughout this century have published stories in national and foreign journals (i.e., Mercedes González de Moscoso, María Natalia Vaca, Nela Martínez, Carmen Vela de Manzano, Mariano Barzallo, Inés Barrera, Carmen Acevedo Vega, Mireya Ramírez). Nevertheless, much of the material has gone unnoticed because the periodicals rarely have reached a large reading public: short-lived publications, inadequate communication between cities and regions, and high illiteracy rates are a few basic reasons which explain the limited circulation. As Alejandro Andrade Coello has commented: "Cortas han sido quizá las referencias de luminosas mujeres en este ensayo, no obstante de que casi he agotado las fuentes de información, tan limitadas y dispersas. Por esta circunstancia, la búsqueda ha sido fatigosa. No todo se encuentra en archivos y bibliotecas, porque muchas rosas puras y encendidas, . . . de la inteligencia femenina se ocultan en revistas y periódicos de vida efímera, que algunos se han perdido para siempre en el turbi6n pol6tico. . . ."⁵ Consequently, Ecuadorian critics and students of literature often have referred erroneously to the *absence* of women writers in fiction: "Una r6pida ojeada a la actividad de la mujer ecuatoriana en la literatura nos arroja un saldo desalentador. Pocos nombres se salvan del olvido. . . . [Las mujeres] han oficiado 6nicamente en el sagrado y doloroso campo de la poes6a, mientras tanto, el cuento y la novela han permanecido in6ditos."⁶

Theoretically, women writers should have received greater exposure and recognition with the growth of the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana (founded in 1944), an institution which has established a national publishing house to promote Ecuadorian literature. In general, besides having attempted to centralize publishing, the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana also has created an atmosphere in which intellectuals and artists throughout the country currently have greater access than in the past to one another's work. With regard to women, specifically, the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana has published many of their short stories, either as collections or separate pieces printed in such literary magazines as *Letras del Ecuador* or *Cuadernos del Guayas*.⁷ However, despite improved distribution and circulation of literary materials during this post-World War II period, critics have continued to pay little attention to women's fiction; existing criticism is limited to superficial comments that neither interest readers in the works nor encourage other women to write.

In effect, while most critics have studied enthusiastically the short stories of such writers of note as de la Cuadra, Gallegos Lara, and Gil Gilbert, it is apparent that rather than search the libraries and archives for misplaced texts, they have thought it more convenient simply to deny outright the existence of women's fiction in national literature. Enrique Noboa Arízaga, for example, commented not too long ago: "El quehacer de la literatura femenina ecuatoriana, en lo que a novela o relato se refiere--hay que reconocerlo con lealtad--no ha sido del todo realizado. Seguramente ha faltado algo; quizás ideas o tal vez técnica apropiada. Por ello no hay mucho que destacar en la obra realizada por las mujeres que escriben en el Ecuador."⁸

To counter this critical trend, therefore, the following discussion will complete the analysis of women's contribution to Ecuadorian letters by studying some of the major short stories found among the many written during the last thirty-five years. As in previous chapters, our commentary will be organized thematically, focusing on women's problems, urban concerns, the Indian motif, and contemporary anguish.

The Short Story as a Reflection of Women's Problems

Because of the large number of stories written by women (particularly in comparison with the novel) that deal with a broad range of subjects, one might be inclined to lose sight of the thematic importance of women's problems in the short fictional works. Also, whereas much of the essay and magazine material is primarily feminist--writers overtly defending women's rights and describing their chief concerns--, and whereas the novel with its broad scope is often an attempt to develop extensively the suffering and fears experienced by women, the short story is not as polemical or complete in its presentation of female characters and issues. Obviously, the very nature of the genre demands succinctness, and consequently, the authors have limited themselves to describing specific scenes and episodes in the lives of female characters.

Nevertheless, upon closer examination, it becomes clear writers have made a definite effort in the short story to explore such problems as abortion, sexual exploitation, and social prejudice. Mary Corylé, for example, besides writing about the exploited Indian also presents a small gallery of female characters in her collection entitled *Gleba*.⁹ Similar to the novel, *La profesora* (Velasco de Batallas), "Maestra de escuela" (pp. 44-49) describes the hostile environment in which female

rural teachers find themselves; they are frequently the victims of sexual assaults: "--Ya ve, Curita,--dijo el que hacía de jefe de los Comisionados--; como no hay mujeres blancas en el pueblo y esta grandísima perra está acostumbrada a darnos todo . . . Pero esta vez le dio por resistirse y, en la huída, la bruta se quebró la pata . . . Así y todo, no nos ha ido tan mal" (p. 49). Further on, the priest comments: "--Bienaventurada tú, *Maestra*, que, por echar la simiente en la mente de los niños, recibes en tu vientre la semilla maldita de los hombres que humillan e infaman tu casta" (p. 49).

"Empleada por fin" (pp. 74-81) is another story which depicts women as victims of a *macho* society; this time Corylé describes the plight of an innocent young girl who is deceived by her employer. Thinking her promotion and salary raise are due to her dedication and diligence, she naively accepts a luncheon invitation offered by her boss, "El Ministro," and as might be expected, after drinking too much champagne she succumbs to her host's sexual advances. Naturally, Alicia becomes pregnant and is promptly dismissed from her job: "--Alicia: el estado de usted no es como para asistir al Ministerio, menos, como Secretaria Particular del Ministro. Voy a concederle una licencia indefinida, . . . Por lo demás. . . no fue culpa mía . . . Ya sabe: desde mañana no tendrá que venir al Ministerio" (p. 81).

The tragedy of the unwed mother is further explored in "Mama Emilia" (pp. 57-63), a story about an elderly woman who dedicates her life to protecting abandoned mothers. As one character points out, the necessities of life often force women to commit the basest of crimes: "Me encontró el Patrón,--si no hubiera sido por él, no hubiera venido

al mundo ese desdichado--le conté que mi hijito estaba mal; entonces, él me dijo: si quieres . . . Y también le he de proteger al chico--.

Caí, Niña, caí: por necesidad, no por mala . . . Me dijo diez sucres, otra vez cinco" (p. 57). Later, Mama Elilia explains compassion is not the only reason why she has become a guardian for unwed mothers: "--Y, desde ese tiempo: Ya más de cuarenta años--me dediqué al cuidado de otras desgraciadas como yo: víctimas, casi todas, de la pasión, de la pobreza o del engaño. Si somos mujeres, por qué se nos exige [sic] virtudes de ángeles?" (p. 62). Moreover, since she is convinced her brother lied about her baby dying at birth, Emilia adds that "no sólo la compasión y caridad cristiana me llevan a atenderles y aconsejarles a las pobres: quién sabe si alguna de ellas será MI HIJA" (p. 63).

It is significant Emilia recognizes the possibility that her assumed daughter may also be a victim of a male-oriented society that paradoxically demands women be chaste while expecting men to be sexually aggressive. In effect, Corylé is presenting a very definite image of the female in Ecuadorian society, one which continually appears throughout women's literary works.

Interestingly enough, Corylé does conceive of a woman character who fights fire with fire; rather than resign herself to man's trickery, the protagonist of "La mujer fuerte" (pp. 64-73) defends her honor. According to the story, she is deceived into eloping with her first lover, a man who does not really love her. After two years of careful planning, she invites the *macho*-type to her birthday party, shooting him seven times before all the guests, and then exclaiming it is the happiest day of her life because she has taken vengeance. Corylé ends the story by affirming: "He aquí a la mujer fuerte" (p. 73).

While "Maestra de escuela" and "Empleada por fin" merely present two tragic events experienced by many women, such stories as "Mama Emilia" and "La mujer fuerte" are extremely important in so much as the writer attempts to suggest probable female reactions to female problems; that is, the author is conscious of women's unique position in life, and consequently she tries to go beyond surface reality and describe those motives and fears common to womankind. From a feminist literary point of view, it should be remembered "that feminists *do* recognize the obvious physical differences between men and women. Menstruation, pregnancy (and the fear of it or desire for it), and childbirth are important aspects of female experience and valid subjects for literary expression. To counterbalance the use of women as sex objects in contemporary literature, feminist critics seek subjective descriptions of female sexuality."¹⁰

Consistent with this desire to mirror in literature women's own experiences, Carmen Acevedo Vega describes the suffering experienced by a woman whose husband repeatedly forces her to have abortions because they are too poor to support a larger family.¹¹ Keeping in mind the importance of motherhood in Ecuadorian society, after many years of living in quiet desperation--of becoming pregnant and planning for the future, and then suddenly having to destroy those dreams--it is not surprising the woman finally reaches a breaking point. Pregnant, once again, and fearing another abortion, the protagonist decides she must defend the child, and consequently there remains no other alternative than the murder of her husband.

The problems and fears women endure when confronting an abortion are treated even more clearly in "Las noticias," a story written by

Eugenia Viteri.¹² Whereas Acevedo Vega concentrated on one woman's refusal to have an abortion because she could no longer suppress her maternal instincts, Viteri deals strictly with the anxieties and doubts experienced at the time of the operation. From the outset, the reader learns the protagonist is deeply concerned that, just as her friend, Clemencia Gómez, she too may die from hemorrhaging. Moreover, when considering what she is about to do, the feelings of guilt gnaw at her conscience: "Sacudió la cabeza tratando de olvidar, pero las noticias--aferradas a su cerebro--giran, se reducen y crecen como danza infernal. Ayer fue encontrado un feto de . . ." (p. 35).

In addition, the protagonist's feelings of emptiness and remorse are greatly intensified when Viteri contrasts the precise descriptions of fear and loneliness with an almost matter of fact way of presenting the actual abortion: "Dos dedos en el sexo interrumpen pensamientos y recuerdos. Aprieta los labios, gime. Algo debieron colocarle allí, se está desgarrando" (p. 37). In effect, the swift and unemotional reference to the anticipated climax makes it strikingly clear no one cares about or understands the woman's psychological struggle. Accordingly, the story ends as if a routine business transaction had just been completed: "Entrega al doctor unos billetes de Banco y se va, triste, sola . . . se va" (p. 38).

Viteri's concern for women's problems and reality is further revealed in "Un regalo para Jacinta,"¹³ a story about a thirteen-year-old-pregnant girl who must account for her behavior before a group of female school teachers. However, the author uses Jacinta only as a point of departure; the story is mainly designed to examine how teachers react to the girl's

pregnancy. As might be expected, Jacinta is expelled from school, a decision made by the women despite the similar desires and experiences they share with the young girl. While Jacinta offers her version of what occurred, Viteri leads the reader into the minds of each teacher. For example, the old maid recalls: "'Y a mí, nunca, nunca me pasó nada . . . En vano había recorrido en las noches la inmensa playa solitaria de la Libertad. . . . Nunca me topé con un hombre . . . Ni con un loco . . .!'" (p. 21). As for the young teacher: "'Lo mío fue más romántico, y he tenido suerte. En tanto tiempo, no he quedado embarazada. Claro, que sé tomar precauciones . . .'" (pp. 21-22). Regarding Jacinta's teacher, she is severely upset by the girl's story because "esta historia se pareció a la suya" (p. 22).

In short, while the teachers readily identify with Jacinta, they are compelled to treat her as a social outcast in order to protect their own reputations; after all, a sympathetic reaction to the pregnancy could make the teachers suspect in the eyes of public opinion. Consequently, it is clear Viteri is not only criticizing the characters' hypocrisy, but also the tendency among many women to suppress their own instincts and sense of justice while outwardly conforming to the attitudes and beliefs imposed upon them by society.

Although from a different point of view, Alicia Yáñez Cossío uses the same theme of self-denial and suppression in "Hansel y Gretel,"¹⁴ a story about a woman who continually strives to satisfy her husband's needs while ignoring her own instincts and goals. Specifically, both have pets, but it is Gretel who gives up her sea horse because Hansel's leopard "nunca se domesticaría mientras el caballito de mar estuviera

[sic] allí" (p. 43); both enjoy music (Gretel plays the harp and Hansel listens to a high powered stereofonic system), but it is Gretel who must give up her pastime: "Gretel tenía un arpa, y cuando sonaba la música electrónica, se encerraba en un armario con su arpa, pero por más que pegaba las orejas a las cuerdas, no percibía ningún sonido. Las notas morían en sus dedos, de manera que creyó que el arpa estaba descompuesta y la arrinconó en el fondo del armario" (pp. 43-44); both are fond of the outdoors (Gretel prefers the mountains and Hansel, the beach), but it is Gretel who must conform to her husband's choice of vacation spots: "Hansel era campeón de sky acuático, y Gretel, desde la playa le aplaudía todas sus brillantes maniobras mientras sus manos jugaban haciendo montañas y caminos de arena . . . De vez en cuando, ella suspiraba por la montaña, pero sus suspiros se iban con la brisa . . ." (p. 44)

Clearly, Yáñez Cossío uses this short story to point up the tragic consequences inherent in women's (symbolized by Gretel) patronizing attitude toward men: they can never achieve a positive self-image as long as their importance is primarily measured in terms of male expectations. In fact, Gretel unknowingly seals her fate when she takes the extreme action of undergoing "el tratamiento tipo C que era el más seguro porque no ocasionaba ningún trastorno orgánico: simplemente las apetencias y las reacciones femeninas se hacían tan débiles que las mujeres se adaptaban paulatinamente a las del ser masculino que estaba más cerca, haciéndose al cabo de un corto tiempo una prolongación de él . . ." (pp. 44-45). Thus, despite an absence of overt preaching, "Hansel y Gretel" illustrates the need for women to assert themselves in marriage and/or society in order to realize their full potential as unique human beings.

To sum up, women writers have used the short story as a viable means of presenting their own perceptions of the female's position in Ecuadorian society. Moreover, as was frequently the case in the essay and the novel, the short narrative works also make clear women are dissatisfied with the suffering and exploitation that characterize much of their daily lives. Consequently, the short stories about women's problems may be considered a significant part of the feminist-related literature already studied in this dissertation because they reveal basic social conditions that undermine the quality of women's lives in Ecuador.¹⁵

Women's Concern for Urban Problems

Commitment to national and regional social problems characterizes twentieth-century Ecuadorian fiction, particularly since the publication in 1930 of *Los que se van*, and the subsequent formation of El Grupo de Guayaquil (José de la Cuadra, Joaquín Gallegos Lara, Enrique Gil Gilbert, Alfredo Pareja Diezcanseco, and Demetrio Aguilera Malta). Not surprisingly, while the female writers' interest in women's problems is consistent with this major trend, they have also used the short story to focus on the poverty, frustration, and despair of people from low and middle class backgrounds. By and large, the women writers rarely have been exposed directly to the Ecuadorian *campo* (an area which has provided socialist literature with many themes), and thus, they tend to deal almost exclusively with urban problems.

The two major writers who have best re-created city life in the short story are Zoila María Castro and Eugenia Viteri, women whose work clearly disputes the observation that

al relato ecuatoriano, nacido en 1930, le ha faltado la presencia de una mujer . . . [Ya] que eso se ha debido precisamente "a la tendencia y a la línea de los relatistas ecuatorianos del año 30," que se propusieron golpear en pleno pecho a la hipocresía, decir la verdad territorial y humana de la patria, contar las cosas como son, con el habla de los personajes, con us [sic] actitudes diarias, no siempre gratas--nunca gratas--al oído o la conciencia de quienes confundían la literatura con el bordado o la confitería.¹⁶

Indeed the presence of Castro and Viteri in Ecuadorian letters proves not all women have abstained from writing realistic fiction because they confuse literature with trivial activities (i.e., "el bordado o la confitería"), or because of an inability to write with the straightforward style and direct language needed to represent effectively people's most pressing needs in daily life. If anything, the reason more women have not published stories of this nature may be attributed to the "discrimen que ha pesado sobre la mujer, [que] la ha llevado a cuidarse de opinar, de escribir libremente y sin tapujos por temor a que la juzguen y enjuicien con serveridad, [que] la critiquen peor o la comenten con saña."¹⁷ Accordingly, a few male critics have marvelled at the "masculine" characteristics present in the stories written by Castro and Viteri: "Relatos duros son estos. Tan duros que las gentes gazmoñas, acostumbradas a una literatura femenina de sensiblería y tono mejor, [sic] se han asustado por el tono atrevido que utiliza la autora [Zoila María Castro]. Se diría que no es una mujer la que mueve a ese mundo agitado y doloroso . . ."¹⁸ With regard to Viteri, "asombra que sea una mujer la que revele y narre sucesos, la que nos traslade diálogos y personajes tradicionalmente tan poco 'femeninos' y tan alejados del mundo de una muchacha. Este es el valor fundamental . . .

estar escritos por una mujer y no ser femeninos, sino vitales, vigorosos, cuentos en una palabra. Ambientes del hampa--marihuaneros y rateros--, de hospital y supersticiones, de adulterio"19

Turning to the stories themselves, the major portion of Castro's short fiction is found in *Urbe*,²⁰ a collection which presents various examples of the frustrations and anxieties common to many city dwellers (probably from Guayaquil). "Ilusiones" (pp. 12-17), for example, takes the reader to Guayaquil's black section, La Marimba, and contrasts the optimistic struggle of some to rise out of the ghetto with the resignation of others who believe there is no escape. More specifically, after many years of hard work and sacrifice, a street vender sees her son graduate from high school with honors, and immediately she understands he has a chance of being someone in life. Moreover, the youth becomes a source of pride for many neighbors: "--Hace tiempo dije yo: para que vean los blancos que nos creen tan brutos que no lo somo, que cuando uno de nosotros se empeña, o mejor dicho, se le puede sostener en el colegio, da bastante" (p. 16).

Unfortunately, however, all illusions are shattered when the *bachiller* is run over by a car, confirming the skepticism of Gallinazo, the neighborhood juvenile delinquent who has continually mocked the efforts and aspirations of the other characters. Castro writes:

El cholo bruto se fregó como yo en otro tiempo, estudia que estudia. Que se haga, pues, ilusiones, ahora ahí tieso! Me alegro por la vieja hambrienta. La muy tonta se creyó que iba a tener hijo doctor, y no contó con la Zancuda.

Lo estremeció el gusto de sentirse vivo. Muy adentro de su ser desequilibrado brotaba la desolación de la madre batalladora: "Al pobre lo acosa la caterva de calamidades: si no es la enfermedad, es el vicio; si no las terribles

necesidades, la muerte. Lo cierto es que vivimos de cabeza." . . .

Hizo un gesto escurridizo, y huyó, a consumir en la cantina el fruto de su ratería. (p. 17)

Clearly, Gallinazo is an individual who realizes the odds against moving up the socio-economic ladder, and therefore his only goal in life is to satisfy his most immediate needs and desires, usually accomplished by preying on other people to acquire the needed money.

"El 'jurero'" (pp. 21-24) and "El turno" (pp. 39-43) are two additional stories that present characters whose lives center around their ability to use their wits and to take advantage of any opportunity that might present itself, regardless of the means. In both cases, the protagonists (an unemployed youth and a poor *mayordomo*) give false testimony when they recognize the possibility of making a profit. Like Gallinazo (the vulture), the *mayordomo* witnesses an accident and exclaims unscrupulously: "'¡A este del auto tengo que sacarle harta plata!" ("El turno," p. 42). As for the *jurero*, he justifies his actions and the subsequent death of an innocent victim by reasoning: "Todos lo matamos. El mismo se mató. Ah, ah, la plata matando a la plata, ah!" (El 'jurero'," p. 24).

Of course, the lack of compassion and the unethical ways inherent in a survival-of-the-fittest attitude are not only found within the poor socio-economic sectors of the city; many professionals also have achieved their success by furtive means. "La copia" (pp. 29-35) describes the rise of a young lawyer who betrays his ideals of honesty and integrity, quickly learning how to deceive his clients and how to associate with the *right* people: "En el transcurso de los meses se desorientaba:

sus ideas habituales perdían la fuerza que lo tuvo atado a sus ideales, interesándose menos en los problemas de su club político" (p. 29). Moreover, "de su alma brotaba la satisfacción producida por su habilidad para salirse del montón" (p. 33).

Hence, rather than avoid dealing with the hypocrisies and petty ambitions characteristic of much of society, Castro's *Urbe* clearly reflects people's imperfections and often-times violent nature. Furthermore, to complete her pessimistic view of life, Castro includes in her collection "Memorias" (pp. 25-28) and "La partida" (pp. 36-38), two stories concerned with the loneliness and sense of failure that frequently distress many individuals. Specifically, the old woman who sadly recalls her past in "Memorias" sighs: "'Otra de las cosas horribles de la vejez es no tener con quien conversar'" (p. 25). At the same time, the father in "La partida" decides to abandon his family because: "El chico amaba a la madre. El no le era necesario, ni para el cariño ni para la crianza. . . . Partía arrojado por la familia: no lo necesitaba" (pp. 37-38). In effect, although unknown by most Ecuadorians and overlooked by most literary critics, Castro's short stories do contradict the traditional belief that women writers have not contributed significant material to that large body of Ecuadorian fiction committed to offering the public a more complete understanding of social problems and idiosyncrasies (i.e., reality).²¹

While Castro has limited her short-story production since 1949 to various pieces published in different periodicals, Eugenia Viteri has become Ecuador's most prolific woman writer in the genre

since publishing her first collection of stories, *El anillo y otros cuentos*²² in 1955. Despite the incessant problem of insufficient time (usually because of domestic responsibilities and fatigue), during the last twenty years Viteri has continued her efforts to describe the sorrows and social injustices suffered by many Ecuadorians. As she explains: "Crecí, pues sin traumas, sin amargura, pero muy consciente del dolor, de la injusticia; por ello quise expresar mi protesta, mi rabia, sentía algo muy dentro de mí que deseaba exponer a los demás; hice poemas--malos poemas--, interpreté poemas que me emocionaban, hice teatro, radio-teatro; luego creí haber encontrado el medio preciso, directo para expresar esa permanente inconformidad que latía en mí y escribí un cuento."²³ Moreover, since Viteri has always been inclined to befriend the unskilled workers of very modest means, she writes: "Tuve problemas por esto con mi madre, pero no me arrepiento, porque me ayudaron a conocer mejor su dolor, es decir, su drama. El trato con estos seres me ha permitido conocer a fondo el problema social para escribirlo; los he captado, los he sentido, los he tomado de su fuente natural. . . ."²⁴

Fortunately, because Viteri is very conscious of being an artist she has not used the short story as a political platform for her opinions. In fact, she has written of the need to combine social content with artistic expression:

La renuncia a la gratuidad, la aceptación de la responsabilidad del escritor, la dotación de un mensaje a la obra de arte, no pueden llevar a la pérdida del contenido artístico, a la renuncia de la belleza. Si el escritor se expresa a través del poema, el relato o el drama, no puede olvidar que es un artista y no un político, por más que tenga una aptitud política.

Pero cuando acomete la creación artística no está actuando como político sino como artista responsable. Y un artista responsable enfrenta los hechos de su tiempo, por violentos y trágicos que sean, con objetividad y pasión, pero sin abdicar de su destino creador.²⁵

Consistent with this literary perspective, therefore, Viteri has avoided moralizing or using commonplace political innuendoes that normally limit a work's appeal to a very specific political or geographical context. Clearly, she has attempted to create characters and situations which reflect the emotions and concerns of all humanity: "El localismo limita, hasta empequeñece la obra de arte. Esto no quiere decir que la esencia, la raíz, el espíritu del hecho o la anécdota esté ausente; pero sí quiero guardar, mantener . . . ese equilibrio maravilloso entre lo inmediato y lo universal. Regionalismo no; el mundo que nos rodea sí, y esto ya es universal."²⁶

Compared to *Urbe*, the most distinguishable feature in Viteri's stories is that most characters care about other people; that is, there usually appears a situation in which Viteri illustrates man's ability and willingness to help others. This preponderant theme of human compassion and camaraderie seems to be a kind of reaction against the actual lack of solidarity among people in contemporary society. According to Viteri: "En todo lo que he escrito he pretendido dar un mensaje de solidaridad. Creo que al hombre de mi siglo le falta eso: so-li-da-ri-dad, comprensión, paz. Se nota, se respira una marcada ausencia de valores morales, acentuados en nuestra sociedad individualista cien por cien, donde cada quien pretende los primeros, los segundos, los terceros, es decir todos los puestos."²⁷

Essentially, then, Viteri has written numerous stories which counter man's egotism and selfishness by suggesting an alternative pattern of behavior based on compassion and disinterest. "El secreto" (*El anillo y otros cuentos*, pp. 33-38), for example, is about a man whose dying wife confesses she has been unfaithful, and that their son really has another father. The deceived husband immediately reacts; he feels driven by the need to discover the real father in order to avenge his pride and honor. Shortly afterwards, however, the protagonist realizes that, despite everything, he is the only father the child knows. Consequently, he puts aside his own feelings of shame, and rather than reject the child--symbol of his cuckoldry--, he responds to the boy's needs of love and affection: "Son acaso solamente hijos nuestros, los que llevan nuestra sangre . . .? . . . 'Sí, es mi hijo, el hijo de mi amor!" Y padre e hijo, confundidos en un solo abrazo, se fueron rumbo a la vida" (pp. 37-38).

In "Un buen trabajo" (*El anillo y otros cuentos*, pp. 41-47), Viteri offers another character who understands the need to make certain sacrifices for someone else. Specifically, during his stay in a hospital, Fernando promises a dying patient he will take care of the latter's wife and children who have no means of supporting themselves. Unfortunately, Fernando is also poor; his total capital comes to a meager two *sucres*. Nevertheless, he wants very much to fulfill his promise, and hopefully, alleviate somewhat the family's suffering. Hence, Fernando invites the dead man's wife and children to eat in a nice restaurant where he receives a beating because he cannot pay for the meal. Later, he exclaims: "--Fermín, Fermín. Tus hijas ya tienen

qué comer. Hoy he conseguido un buen trabajo" (p. 47). Although it is not clear how Fernando finds a job, the important point here is that, despite his own problems, he is concerned about a total stranger's abandoned family, and above all, in the absence of any legal or moral obligation, he is determined to take care of Fermín's wife and children.

"El oficio" (*El anillo y otros cuentos*, pp. 85-93) represents a slight variation to Viteri's concern for human solidarity, and moreover, it is a story that further illustrates the marked difference in tone which exists between *Urbe* and Viteri's work, in general. Unlike Castro's characters who unscrupulously seek out their victims, the protagonist of "El oficio" makes a conscious effort to earn money by trickery, but without harming other people. In effect, when the youth's father, a bogus spiritist, tries to persuade him to become a doctor or a lawyer rather than another *brujo*, the boy emphatically points out: "--¿Abogado? ¡Eso sí que no, papá! ¿Abogado como el doctor de aquí al lado? Si eso es peor que este . . . De aquí, la gente al menos sale contenta. De la casa del doctor, los montuvios salen llorando. Esa viuda del otro día cómo maldecía! ¡Abogado, nunca!--" (p. 92).²⁸

Naturally, there are other aspects in Viteri's fiction that remain to be studied (i.e., the role of children, the importance of using the imagination as a means of escaping one's misery, and a closer examination of women in the stories), however the most significant element is certainly the author's apparent interest in deviate literature, a rarity in Latin American narrative. On four different occasions Viteri writes about homosexuals,²⁹ a particularly explosive theme when considering the importance in Ecuador (Latin America) of the Church and

the concepts of morality, femininity, and masculinity. Nevertheless, despite the social pressures that have turned writers, especially women writers, away from homosexuality as a viable theme, Viteri has stated:

Si mi compromiso es con el hombre de mi siglo, de mi mundo y mi deseo es llegar hasta él con mi mensaje solidario aún [sic] en sus más oscuros instintos, errores, desviaciones. ¿cómo no hablar de sus negativismos también, cómo no hacerme eco de sus flaquezas? No hacerlo sería mostrar del hombre sólo aquello que se considera bueno, decente, presentable. Esto sería una gran estupidez, ignorancia o hipocresía . . . Todo, absolutamente todo lo que es inherente al ser humano me interesa, me amarga su drama, me preocupa su tragedia física o moral. Jámás alejaré de mi temática estos tópicos no para aplaudirlos, pero sí para tratar de explicarlos, comprenderlos, desentrañarlos, en el deseo--a lo mejor--de ayudarlo, jamás para colgarlo sin antes oírlo.³⁰

In "Los impuros" (*Doce cuentos*, pp. 55-58), her first story about homosexuality to appear, Viteri is really concerned about the parents of one homosexual; after the son commits suicide, the mother and father try to explain how they failed in their parental roles, revealing their guilt feelings and shame. Also, it is interesting to note that although Viteri is careful not to mention the term homosexual, there can be no mistake about the story's theme. That is, when one of the son's friends visits the parents to pay his last respects, the mother explains: "'Es él . . . un hombre con distinción y modales: he reconocido su voz. En la habitación oscura no pude distinguirlos. Pero eran sus voces, sus gemidos. Cada día, uno distinto. ¡Impuros!'" (p. 57). Curiously enough, Viteri makes clear that while the parents are incapable of understanding and accepting their son's lifestyle, it is the homosexual friend who really has appreciated and perceived the dead youth's

qualities: "--aún tengo en mis manos su perfume, en mi piel su clima, suplenitud en mi sangre! ¡Fuego era su alma, poema su cuerpo, sus labios: herida canción!" (p. 57)

Unlike "Los impuros," no one refers to the virtues of the homosexual in "Nuevas Lilianas,"³¹ a story about a married woman who is mistreated and persecuted by her sadistic and deviate husband, described as: "Un enfermo sin cuidado, sin disciplina, sin amor, . . ." Besides being the victim of her husband's cruel jokes (i.e., being locked in a bathroom for hours while showering, and in complete darkness), Liliana describes the tension and suffering she has experienced since her wedding night: "No sé por qué sentí asco . . . Junto a este hombre yo debía compartir todos los días de mi vida. Ya en la casa, esta que hoy me sirve de prisión, sin decirme una palabra, me instaló en la cama y salió con ese paso suyo, precipitado y breve. Al ir a vestirme noté dos cosas: yo estaba intacta, como antes de mi matrimonio, sólo que . . . mi pubis había sido . . . rasurado. Una semana después vino a mi lecho y como explicación así de paso: '*Tuve que hacerlo para salvarme*'" (emphasis added). This last statement, however, seems to suggest the tremendous social pressure that has forced her husband to marry. Moreover, although the story is told from Liliana's point of view--describing her as the victim--, it may very well be that the man's sadistic behavior towards her is his only means of fighting back against a society that demands he conform to accepted male behavior.

More recently, Viteri has written "Florencia" (*Los zapatos y los sueños*, pp. 1-6), a story which intimates that homosexuality may be a satisfactory alternative for some women who consider marriage and

masculine domination too much to bear. It is significant that Viteri has commented: "Ha habido casos en colegios, donde hay chicas que dicen: 'Yo no me meto con hombres porque me desacreditan y me dejan hijos. Entonces me causaría más satisfacción meterme con una chica que ni me desacredita ni me deja hijos.'"³² However, since not all women deviates, or potential deviates, are willing to adopt such a radical position in a highly traditionalist society, many have quietly resigned themselves to the unfulfilling, but socially acceptable institution of marriage.

Viteri focuses on this problem when referring briefly to the lives of two women: Isaura, a confirmed lesbian, and Florencia, the ex-lover who eventually chooses to search for "un capitán de ojos verdes" (p. 3). Unfortunately, after Florencia marries, all turns out tragically for both women: while Florencia becomes an abandoned mother of five hungry children, Isaura is never really satisfied with her singing career. Also, the marked difference between the past and present is clearly emphasized by Isaura who nostalgically recalls her relationship with Florencia: "¡Juntas éramos invencibles! Fuertes como la hierba que agita el viento, baña el polvo, . . . se mantiene erguida cara al cielo. . . . Cogíamos peces que luego preparábamos en improvisados braseros, con los pies en el agua penetrada de misterio y nuestros cuerpos ardientes hundidos en la arena, comíamos felices!" (p. 3). As for the present, Isaura remarks: "Nunca le dije [a Florencia] lo sucio de la radio. ¡Ella me creía triunfadora en un mundo de mujeres reprimidas! Sus cinco hijos escuálidos, harapientos, la ataban a una piedra. Empezaba cuando el sol todavía no se animaba a salir y se

iba con él, no para encontrar una mesa dispuesta, una sopa caliente. Apenas para reventarse el cerebro y poner cara de palo al tendero de la esquina que hace mucho no fía" (p. 4).

Consequently, when Florencia dies of tuberculosis, and in complete poverty, Isaura realizes they both have thrown away their opportunity to be happy. With deep sorrow and an obvious feeling of loneliness, she grieves over having lost her true love:

Se arregló [Isaura] un poco frente a un pequeño espejo, tomó su cartera y al comprobar la falta de un pañuelo, hurgó rápidamente en el cajón de su mesatocador. La presencia de un retrato olvidado la sacudió e hizo que se sentara vencida al fin. Con ojos extasiados contempló la imagen de una mujer joven y alegre. En el reverso: Para el amor de mi vida, Isaura.

"¡Eran otros tiempos, querida, ¡cuánto nos amábamos! Y sin embargo, te marchaste con ése que ni siquiera tenía los ojos verdes que tu anhelabas. No te importaron mis besos ni las canciones que aprendí para ti. ¡Todo lo cambiaste por un pecho viril, ah mujeres, mujeres!" (pp. 5-6)

With regard to the remaining story, "Los exaltados" (*Los zapatos y los sueños*, pp. 1-4), Viteri abandons the somewhat psychological method of focusing on people's attitudes and reactions to homosexuality and actually describes a forced act of sodomy. Briefly, when members of a street gang try to beat up Pablo, Luis Arturo defends his friend by challenging to a fight Jacinto, the head of the rival group. After arriving at the designated meeting place, Luis Arturo and Pablo realize they have been tricked:

Entusiasmado con lo que creía su triunfo sobre los mequetrefes del patio, Jacinto dispuso que colocaran a los dos muchachos uno a continuación del otro, con los brazos y las piernas amarrados a sus cuerpos. . . .

Con gracia femenina y coquetería de estriptisera se sacó el pantalón; un bikini rojo con rombos azules, después y . . . agitándolo se deslizó sinuoso por encima del primer chico. A la altura de la cabeza, puesto en cuclillas,

absorto y sombrío, hizo coincidir su falo en la boca del muchacho. Se irguió esbelto, gracioso, ligero. Saludó con un brevísimo movimiento de cabeza a sus amigos y sin dejar de agitar su bikini con rombos azules, se alejó cimbreado. Roncos de gritar y reír, histéricos hasta las lágrimas, celebraban a Jacinto imitado rápidamente. (pp. 3-4)³³

In short, while it may be argued that "Los exaltados" is not an example of deviate literature because the homosexual act described seems to be simply a prank carried out by a group of juvenile delinquents, it does, however, illustrate the daring with which Viteri writes. Moreover, since the Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana has decided to publish *Los zapatos y los sueños*,³⁴ one might conclude that today's women have greater freedom than their predecessors to express themselves in literature. Indeed due to the efforts made by such writers as Viteri and Zoila María Castro, two women who have openly challenged traditional stereotypes and taboos, aspiring contemporary women writers do have a significant, although still limited, source of material to draw on for needed inspiration and artistic thematic guidance.

Other women who occasionally have experimented with the short story to reflect some of the social problems readily connected with urban life (i.e., the failings of bureaucracy, the poverty of slum dwellers, and the hypocrisies of the professional class) are Carmen Acevedo Vega and Violeta Luna, two writers who have mainly cultivated poetry. With regard to their fiction, particularly noteworthy is Acevedo Vega's "La línea 7,"³⁵ a short story that deplores the expansion of Guayaquil's *suburbio*: "Bien dice Ud., es la suerte del pobre; cada vez nos botan más y más afuera sobre el fango, al manglar; nosotros sufrimos todas

las inclemencias, fabricamos encima del pantano y nos resignamos a vivir sin luz ni agua, y cuando ya está poblado viene el Municipio y bota unas cuantas camionadas de cascajo en las calles, y en seguida vienen los ricos a acaparar los solares" (p. 3). As for Violeta Luna, besides apparent communist beliefs, her collection of short stories, entitled *Los pasos amarillos*,³⁶ reveals the same openness and candor that was seen in Viteri's work, especially in those pieces dealing with rape ("Un ser anónimo," pp. 33-36) and lesbianism ("Cristina," pp. 59-64).

The Indian Motif

Although women writers have used literature chiefly to reflect their urban experiences and concerns, if one considers the fact Ecuador is an Andean country, it is not surprising some authors also have written works which focus on the Indian motif. Basically, these writers have portrayed the Indian from two very different points of view: (1) as an idealized figure reminiscent of romanticism; and (2) as a victim of exploitation, a theme common to twentieth-century *indigenista* literature. In the first case, the major writers to have created Indian heroes and heroines (i.e., wise men, brave warriors, pure and chaste maidens/princesses) appear to be Eugenia Tinajero Martínez de Allen, author of *Leyendas indígenas*,³⁷ and Laura Pérez de Oleas Zambrano, author of *Historias, leyendas y tradiciones ecuatorianas*.³⁸

In typical fashion, Tinajero Martínez avoids describing the grave problems Indians face in modern Ecuador and writes "Los ojitos de Mishqui-Huarmi" (*Leyendas indígenas*, pp. 7-11), a story about a young maiden who is loved by both her fiance and the sun. After stealing

away the girl, the sun relieves the fiance's sorrow by converting him into a rock; henceforth, this enables the young couple to be in constant contact: "Cuando el sol la baña [la roca] en su luz por la mañana, parece que por ella circula aún la ardiente sangre del indio enamorado, y cuando viene la noche, puede este [sic] contemplar allá, junto a la Cruz del Sur, dos estrellitas, que son los ojos de Mishqui Huarmi, que le miran dulcemente desde lejos y por siempre" (pp. 10-11).

While most of the stories found in *Leyendas indígenas* are similar to "Los ojitos de Mishqui-Huarmi," i.e., sentimental love stories,³⁹ the ones written by Pérez de Oleas frequently glorify the Inca past and exaggerate the Indians' noble, valorous character. In "Atahualpa, sabio, profeta y poeta" (pp. 51-62), the author narrates a conversation she has had with an old Indian who knows by heart the wise sayings Atahualpa supposedly composed. Indeed after reading some of the examples, one is inclined to think of the Inca as another Solomon:

Porque la obediencia y la sabiduría valen más que el oro que adorna mi persona. (p. 55)

No hurtéis el agua ni el sembrado, porque nada dulce será lo escondido y rapiñado. (p. 55)

Huye, hijo mío, de las manos que derraman sangre, de la lengua mentirosa, de los ojos torvos y de los pies que corren hacia el mal. (p. 56)

Porque mejor es dar poco con justicia que muchas víctimas y con iniquidad. (p. 58)

Further praise of Atahualpa and the Inca culture, in general, is presented in "Cori Duchicela" (pp. 141-149), a story in which the author directly intervenes when referring to the Conquest:

. . . aumentó el dolor de los kitus por la pérdida del más grande y sabio de los Schyris, de aquel soberano

que no solamente supo guiar con sabiduría y bondad a su pueblo, sino que fue, además, el Inca que llegó a un grado extraordinario de cultura, tan avanzada para su época, que en realidad causan asombro la finura y cultivo que poseyó su espíritu, pues, según últimos datos consignados en un libro recientemente publicado, existen unos bellísimos y delicados poemas atribuidos a Atahualpa. De ser esto verdad, quedaríamos perplejos ante el horrendo crimen español que hizo, con Atahualpa y su reino, desaparecer una gran cultura. (pp. 147-148)

With regard to the *indigenista* literature, however, the authors are not concerned with extolling the Inca past, nor are they interested in dwelling on idealized archetypes that often make the reading public forget about the *real* Indians. One of the earliest stories of this type written by a woman is "Taita Imbabura: Leyenda indígena,"⁴⁰ a work which reflects the humiliation and sexual abuse suffered by many Indian women in Ecuador. Briefly, whereas most mothers believe their daughters have given birth to caucasian-like children because of having been raped by a mysterious wandering spirit, Taita Imbabura, María Juana knows the girls have been raped by the local landowner. Consequently, she prepares to defend her daughter: "No, y no; el malvado que ultrajó a la madre no pisoteará el honor de su propia hija! . . . María Juana, blandiendo un afilado puñal guarda día y noche la entrada de su choza. Su hija no irá a la cosecha; su longa no irá por las ovejas; su hija no cree en la existencia de Taita Imbabura."

Of course, a problem with most *indigenista* literature is that the writers rarely go beyond the external realities (i.e., poverty, illiteracy, injustice) that are readily perceived by whites; moreover, the thoughts and reactions of the Indian characters in fiction are more consistent with a western mentality than an Indian one. For example,

Mary Corylé has written numerous stories which employ the traditional *indigenista* pattern: the cruel and insensitive white man (i.e., priest, landowner, government official) victimizes the poor and innocent Indian. Consequently, one frequently reads in Corylé's stories such archetypal passages as:

--Mira,--lo dijo el Cura--no me niegues, la Dolores era blanca; entonces, son quince sucres que tienes que pagar de los derechos. La misa con música y ocho ceras, quince más y diez responso cantados, para que tu mujer suba de contadito al cielo, a sucre responso . . . Me llevo la vaca, tú te quedas con lo demás.⁴¹

--A los indios y los perros hay que darles palo a que entiendan. --Y sacando las riendas de uno de sus caballos desolló con ellas las tostadas espaldas de la Ugi.

--No te dije animal, que si vuelves, te daría látigo?⁴²

Siendo indios no más, por qué mos di ahuantar-pes; bestias tamé cansan. Y por ísto hay llamadu, para vir si dentramus en Cuinca y acabamus con los huiracochas [caballeros]. Con piedras, palos y alguna escopetica, cómo no mos di poder-pes. Quiren ostedes ayodar?⁴³

Notwithstanding this simplistic view of the Indian, however, Corylé is aware of the complex differences which exist between the white/*mestizo* and Indian cultures, and therefore has written at least two stories that go beyond mere dualism (i.e., good vs. evil). In "Curato de montaña" (*Gleba*, pp. 11-18), a young priest is bewildered when his Indian parish rejects his honesty and efforts to help the community prosper, accusing him of having caused the present drought:

Los indios, desde el primer momento, acusaron de tan desusado flagelo al Huahua [Niño] Taitito: porque había quitado todas las fiestas; porque no dejaba dormir, cada mes, la noche de Renovación del Amo Sacramentado, a los priostes borrachos, hombres, mujeres, mujeres y hasta huahuas, dentro de la iglesia; porque no iba con ellos a los anejos y presidía las comilonas y borracheras generales, que terminaban siempre en fenomenales grescas

y peleas. En fin, el Pueblo pagaba la masonería del Párroco, que no podía ver esas cosas que tanto gustaban a Taita Diosito. (p. 17)

Clearly, Corylé is pointing out a widespread problem which has prevented the two cultures from living together in harmony: too often well-intentioned whites antagonize Indians when they very self-righteously insist the latter adopt outright a set of alien values and beliefs.

This same sensitivity to and acceptance of the Indian world appear in "Soplando el pingullo" (*Mundo pequeño*, pp. 55-62), a story which illustrates the joy experienced by a dying boy who comes into contact with his own culture. After refusing the many toys offered him on Christmas Eve, he takes up a cornet and enthusiastically begins to blow what he imagines to be an Indian flute, *El pingullo*: "El viento silbando en la paja del cerro; los mugidos del ganado bravío; la quipa convocadora de indios, para las mingas; . . . el pingullo del Tío Juancho llorando en la quebrada: todo esto oyó el longuito en la música del juguete" (p. 62). In effect, Corylé recognizes the Indians' deep attachment to their own culture, and is apparently suggesting they not be expected to renounce it completely.

Another story that should be mentioned is Zoila María Castro's "Amor" (*Urbe*, pp. 8-11), a work which describes the prejudice against which a successful Indian lawyer-journalist-professor fights, particularly when he falls in love with a white divorcee. As might be expected, the protagonist can no longer conform to the inferior social status normally associated with the Indian race: "No, él no se contenta con el amor de las cholitas; y chicas del montón que lo consideraban su igual, aunque triunfador con su título de abogado, su prestigio de periodista

y su cátedra universitaria. . . . Quería casarse con la sensación y la seguridad que subía por la escala social" (p. 10). The obvious point of interest here is the problems and pressures an Indian faces once he is successful in terms of white society's values and ideals.

Essentially, then, although the Indian motif represents a secondary theme in women writers' short stories, the available material certainly demonstrates the authors' interest in Indian folklore, and their concern with the suffering endured by the indigenous communities.⁴⁴ Indeed several writers have contributed to a greater understanding and appreciation of the Ecuadorian Indian: on the one hand, the idealized portrayals of Indian figures, many of which are based on Indian legends, reflect an attempt by some women to conserve a vital part of national oral history; on the other hand, such writers as Castro and Corylé have tried to bridge the cultural gap between the white and Indian races by avoiding a purely dualistic point of view characteristic of much of *indigenista* literature.

The Theme of Contemporary Anguish in the Short Story

The anguish and feelings of alienation of many modern writers who face a paradoxical world in which scientific progress and advanced technology seem to move people closer to total destruction has also troubled Lupe Rumazo and Alicia Yáñez Cossío, two writers who have revealed their contemporary fears in numerous short stories which describe the individual's search for identity and meaningful existence. Rumazo's "Edad fetiche,"⁴⁶ for example, presents a young woman's fear of being

completely absorbed by the dehumanizing effects of a machine-oriented world:

Un señor me da un golpe en el brazo; quiero protestar, pero ya se ha ido rápidamente; he visto su expresión de sonámbulo. Va también al empleo. No tenemos el rostro libre de los niños que se dirigen a la escuela. ¿No es acaso el trabajo una escuela dedicada a enseñarnos las relaciones con las máquinas? Yo detesto la mía; enfrenta su perfección eléctrica a mi incapacidad. "Todo le sucede por estar nerviosa; contrólese y verá como no comete faltas . . ." Mi máquina verde ceniza no tolera desequilibrios. ¿Cómo introducir su frialdad dentro de mí? A pesar de todo, la besaría en ocasiones; es mi salvadora en trances angustiosos. ¿Por qué besan los esclavos a los patrones? (p. 54)

Clearly, the protagonist is deeply troubled over the power of machines to dominate and determine human behavior. Whether it be the "sonámbulo" described above who apparently has worked so long with machines that he no longer can vary his routine, or the protagonist herself who admittedly feels inadequate because she is not as capable as her typewriter, people are obviously governed by a machine-like mentality which values efficiency and production more than interpersonal relationships that traditionally have given men and women a sense of importance.

Moreover, the narrator's suffering is further heightened when she alludes to her own struggle against living a life of daily/routine work that tends to numb one's sense of creativity and originality:

Luchan en mi dos tendencias: aquella que me obliga a laborar en una forma excluyente y aquella que me señala un peligro. "Usted ha vendido su tiempo, no su mente y sus facultades; no caiga en el abajamiento con tanta facilidad," me dice la segunda. "Usted debe triunfar en su labor como ha dominado todo lo que se ha propuesto; . . ." interviene, autoritaria, la primera, (pp. 60-61)

Later she laments: "Estoy desorientada. Sólo busco la perfección de lo mecánico. Ya no intenta brindar ayuda; es inútil, me voy insensi-

bilizando paulatinamente. El aspecto sensible y, sobre todo, el de satisfacción personal va perdiendo día a día sus contornos, diluyéndose" (p. 62).

This same concern over the dangers of modern technology is also seen in Alicia Yáñez Cossío's collection of futuristic stories, *Triquitraque*. However, whereas Rumazo talked about struggling against the dehumanizing trends of contemporary society, Yáñez projects further into the future and describes a world already controlled by computers and the excesses of cybernetics. In "La niña fea" (pp. 29-31), for example, one learns that the medical discoveries which have eliminated death also have worsened today's overpopulation and hunger problems, and consequently, people are shown to be even more alienated and disoriented than at present:

Abajo, los estadistas han llegado a un acuerdo mediante el cual no habrá otra guerra mundial, pero la humanidad casi la desea porque en las ciudades no hay espacio suficiente para convivir. . . . El aire es rancio y los alimentos sintéticos no abastecen. Algunos piensan que dos bombas de hidrógeno serían suficientes para limpiar el mundo. . . . Se supone que en algún lugar secreto existe una gran nave inter-planetaria dispuesta a llevarse las semillas humanas a otros planetas . . . Se dicen tantas cosas . . . y este temor es el que hace que los hombres se odien entre sí y se miren como enemigos.

.
El miedo y la inseguridad ha ido formando poco a poco una generación fría y desalmada. (p. 29)

In effect, people's increased dependence on science and automation coupled with an ever-present fear of destruction have removed any possible sense of human solidarity. Hence, after a child is killed by a "vehículo supersónico" in "Uno menos" (pp. 18-21), Yáñez describes the indifference that characterizes people's reactions to human suffering:

"La gente que transitaba de sus asuntos a su rutina y vio el espectáculo, se encogió de hombros y dijo: 'Uno menos'" (p. 20). Moreover, the child's death is further depersonalized when the author writes:

"Instantáneamente apareció en el lugar un carro de limpieza y con una pala mecánica recogió los restos del niño. Los metió en su fondo junto a la basura que traía. Luego limpió la calle con un chorro de agua y desapareció . . ." (p. 20).

Yáñez's futuristic view becomes even more pessimistic in "La IWM Mil" (pp. 46-49), a story about a kind of pocket calculator which does all of man's thinking: "Hace mucho tiempo, todos los profesores desaparecieron tragados y digeridos por el nuevo sistema" (p. 46). After a period of time, however, various people decide they want to be self-sufficient, knowledgeable, and hence, they begin to study the alphabet in order to learn how to read. Later, enthusiastic over their intellectual achievements, the members of the group travel to Takandia, a land where there are no machines to govern their existence. Notwithstanding this return to a completely human world, Yáñez quickly points out that the future dangers described throughout *Triquitraque* are still present: "Los hombres que han llegado a Takandia se dan cuenta de que por primera vez en sus vidas están entre verdaderos seres humanos y empiezan a sentirse felices. Buscan amigos, gritan como ellos, y empiezan a quitarse la ropa y dejarla tirada entre las matas. Los habitantes de Takandia se olvidan por unos momentos de los visitantes para pelearse por las ropas que encuentran tiradas . . ." (p. 4). In short, there seems to be no escape from man's incessant search for something new and unknown--a

natural instinct apparently destined to lead humanity to eventual destruction.

Of course, while much of contemporary anguish and fear has been attributed to automation and subsequent depersonalization of life, not all writers have described their concerns exclusively in terms of man's struggle to overcome domination by machines. In fact, a significant portion of contemporary fiction has focused on the sense of futility that people experience when realizing they are unable to communicate or identify with others. Consistent with this trend, Lupe Rumazo has written "La marcha de los batracios,"⁴⁷ a story about a novelist who decides to commit suicide because he cannot satisfactorily articulate his ideas which totally contradict established beliefs: "Estaba harto. Sí, en un tiempo él había pensado que su novela habría podido producir una conmoción. La novela hecha, terminada en trescientas páginas, aunque estuviera íntegra en su cabeza; era una novela de la marcha, que paradójicamente no marchaba. La novela detenida, como había que detener hoy, y no después, la existencia de su autor" (pp. 33-34).

Besides additional stories ("Barrer desperdicios" and "Ping-pong," in *Sílabas de la tierra*) which illustrate the feelings of loneliness and estrangement characteristic of contemporary life, Rumazo's chief contribution to women's fiction in Ecuador is not her use of innovative themes, but rather her ability to write with the most avant-garde literary techniques presently in vogue in the Latin American narrative. Unlike other Ecuadorian women writers who have been primarily concerned with demonstrating to the reader a specific problem, Rumazo writes psychological studies in which the characters

themselves discuss their inner-most thoughts. Consequently, because she has abandoned a traditional (chronological) narrative technique that deals mainly with immediate social problems, numerous stories are marked by the author's experimentation with time, interior monologues, stream of consciousness, and counterpoint.

For example, in "Edad fetiche" Rumazo recreates the manner in which the human mind functions when she combines real conversations with imaginary ones, and above all, when she abandons conventional paragraphing and punctuation. Accordingly, during the narrator's dreams about meeting her fiancé, one reads:

¿Intuías que éste es nuestro último encuentro?
 ¿Por qué va a ser el último? . . . No me verás nunca
 más. Faltan dos metros para que llegue el vehículo.
 Le hago señas de prisa. ¿Por qué, por qué?, pregunta.
 . . . Señorita, no oía sus llamadas; no hay volumen
 en su voz. Si no volteo a mirar, no me doy cuenta,
 interviene el chofer, . . . Pablo pretende acompañarme.
 No lo dejo . . . Me ofendes con tu rechazo. Pues a mí me
 ofende más que no te decidas a amarme; tú eres el hombre
 que yo quiero. Siga rápido, rápido, le ordeno al con-
 ductor. (p. 135)

Similarly "La marcha de los batricios" reveals Rumazo's interest in experimenting with new forms of presenting dialogue:

Y la familia de Mahler esperándole con un gran
 almuerzo con pollo y él, no soy antropófago, por eso
 no mato animales en mis obras. Y la esposa, riéndose de
 la ocurrencia, si hubiéramos sabido su aversión; pero
 hay tantas otras cosas que hemos preparado para usted, y
 él enigmático, con voz ronca, prefiero no comer nada,
 solamente mirarlos; ustedes son míos, de mi misma sangre,
 aunque a Mahler no lo quieran ciertos intelectuales, así
 de frente y de pronto para desconcertarlos. Y ella,
 furiosa, pero disimulando, deseando al mismo tiempo
 saber qué dicen de su marido. Y él, les contaré eso,
 . . . (p. 24)

In addition, both stories mentioned above show Rumazo understands reality in terms of multiplicity and *simultaneidad*, a basic concept found

in much of contemporary fiction. Significantly, each work recreates a total experience (i.e., the narrator's youth in "Edad fetiche;" the novelist's last few days before committing suicide in "La marcha de los batracios") by presenting a fragmented series of seemingly unrelated events and ideas, independent of logical time/space patterns. As a result, Benjamín Carrión has commented: "Lupe Rumazo nos prueba que tiene capacidad y vocación para romper las ataduras de la receta balzaciana del relato: contar sucedidos. . . . Tiene rotas las ataduras--tan difíciles de romper--de la vieja manera de contar, de la que se está sacudiendo, con ímpetu inesperado, la juventud literaria latinoamericana. Sabe ella de los nuevos *tempos* para medir espacio y tiempo. . . . Lupe Rumazo está muy bien armada para . . . darnos [a los ecuatorianos] un novelista de la gran línea latinoamericana que se inicia."⁴⁸

Besides the themes and works already discussed, some women have written children's literature intended to entertain and educate young people. According to Manuel del Pino, editor of *Antología de literatura infantil ecuatoriana (cuento y teatro)*,⁴⁹ children's literature is "una narración generalmente corta, sugestiva, interesante, bellamente escrita, llena de incidentes, que encierra siempre alguna enseñanza moral y es producto casi exclusivo de la imaginación del autor. . . . [Además,] se narran sucesos extraordinarios, prodigiosos, sobrenaturales, de árboles que cantan y bailan, de pájaros que hablan y razonan, de botas que caminan solas, etc."⁵⁰ Consistent with this definition are stories written by Mary Corylé, Teresa Crespo de Salvador, Julia Ramón

de Espinosa, Emma Hipatia Gordillo Rodríguez, Graciela del Pino A.,
and Angélica Martínez de Vinuesa.⁵¹

Notes
Chapter VI

¹Cornelia Martínez, "Paulina (Impresiones y recuerdos)," *Los mejores cuentos ecuatorianos*, ed. Inés Barrera and Eulalia Barrera (Quito: Empresa Editora "El Comercio," 1948), pp. 152-163; Rosario Mera, "El eterno Don Juan," *Los mejores cuentos ecuatorianos*, pp. 260-263.

²*Galería del espíritu: Mujeres de mi patria*, pp. 93-94. According to Carvajal, Ayala González published her first story in 1894, five years after "Paulina (Impresiones y recuerdos)". It is assumed Carvajal was referring to Ayala González as the first woman who actually dedicated herself to writing short stories.

³*Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁴1, 8-9 (July-August, 1918), 171. Once she began to publish in Ecuador, Ayala González wrote mainly for Guayaquil's *La Ilustración*, publishing the already-mentioned stories: "La procesión de las ánimas," 1, 2 (May 27, 1917), 53, 56; "La maldición," 1, 1 (May 6, 1917), 22.

⁵"Cultura femenina: Floración intelectual de la mujer ecuatoriana en el siglo XX," p. 327.

⁶Cristóbal Garcés Larrea, review of *Urbe* by Zoila María Castro, in *Letras del Ecuador*, V, 53-54 (January-February, 1950), 15.

⁷The Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana has *núcleos* in each region; the *núcleos* have their own literary magazines and serve the interests of their respective regions. *Letras del Ecuador* (Quito) and *Cuadernos del Guayas* (Guayaquil) are the principal publications because they are from Ecuador's two major cities. Unfortunately, due to economic and organizational problems, much of the Casa's effectiveness has faltered in recent years.

⁸Review of *A noventa millas, solamente* by Eugenia Viteri, *Mañana* (n.v., n.d.), p. 13. The review must have been written in 1969 or 1970 since Viteri published the cited novel in 1969.

⁹Cuenca: Editorial "Amazonas," 1952. Corylé is a pen name; the author's real name is Ramona María Cordero León.

¹⁰Cheri Register, "American Feminist Literary Criticism: A Bibliographical Introduction," p. 14. Register footnoted this statement, acknowledging Elaine Showalter, "Women in the Literary Curriculum," *College English* 32 (May 1971): 856; idem, "Women writers and the Double Standard," *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, ed. Gornick and Moran (New York: Basic Books, 1971), p. 343; Barbara

Alson Wasserman, *The Bold New Women*, rev. ed. (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1970, p. 10; and Joyce Nower, in a letter to Register, March 7, 1972.

¹¹"Los que no llegaron," *La Semana*, 11, 29 (January 2, 1960), 3, 14, 15.

¹²*Doce cuentos* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1962), pp. 35-38.

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 19-24.

¹⁴*Triquitraque* (to be published by Ediciones Paulina, Bogotá). A copy of the original manuscript has been used for this dissertation.

¹⁵Other stories concerned with women's problems are the following: by Mary Corylé, in *Gleba*: "Madre," pp. 50-53; "En la policía," pp. 82-87; "Las hembras ciudadanas," pp. 88-92; "La doncella era una santa," pp. 93-97; "Doña Figuración," pp. 133-137. Zoila María Castro, "La malograda," *Urbe* (Guayaquil: Publicaciones del Grupo Madrugada, 1949), pp. 18-20; by Eugenia Viteri: "Departamento de arriendo," *Doce cuentos*, pp. 41-46; "La misa del Niño," *Doce cuentos*, pp. 75-81; "Maternidad," *El anillo y otros cuentos* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1955), pp. 23-24; "Flores," *Los zapatos y los sueños* (to be published by Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, Núcleo del Guayas, 1976), pp. 1-6; "En una noche de ébano," *Los zapatos y los sueños*, pp. 1-6 (pagination for stories in original manuscript of *Los zapatos y los sueños* is not consecutive). By Violeta Luna: "La empleada," *Los pasos amarillos* (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1969), pp. 13-16; "La celda," pp. 19-29; "Un ser anónimo," pp. 33-36; "Locura," pp. 111-113. Lupe Rumazo, "Barrer desperdicios," *Sílabas de la tierra*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Ediciones EDIME, 1968), pp. 15-26. Mireya Ramírez, "Treponema," in *Antología de cuentos esmeraldeños*, ed. Nelson Estupiñán Bass (Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1960), pp. 45-47.

¹⁶Review of Viteri's *El anillo y otros cuentos*, *Letras del Ecuador*, XI, 103 (July-September 1955), 34. According to the review, the quoted material paraphrases a statement made by Benjamín Carrión.

¹⁷Taped interview with Viteri; March 13, 1975.

¹⁸Critóbal Garcés Larrea, review of *Urbe*. See note 6.

¹⁹See note 15.

²⁰Already cited in note 15.

²¹Besides the difficulty in locating a copy of *Urbe*, many Ecuadorians have had no contact with Castro because she lives in New York City.

²²Already cited in note 15. Her two other collections are: *Doce cuentos*, and *Los zapatos y los sueños*.

²³Taped interview with the author; March 13, 1975.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵"¿Literatura evasioneista o literatura comprometida?," *Letras del Ecuador*, XII, 107 (January-May 1957), 10.

²⁶Interview with author; March 13, 1975.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸More examples of this kind of compassion and human solidarity can be found in Viteri's *Los Zapatos y los sueños*, a collection of related stories about a group of ghetto residents who live and struggle together. See also, in *El anillo y otros cuentos*: "Minina" (pp. 51-55), "Un gran torero" (pp. 69-72); in *Doce cuentos*: "La vida y los recuerdos" (pp. 27-32), "Por Navidad" (pp. 69-72).

²⁹This does not include the references to homosexuality/lesbianism found in Viteri's novel, *A noventa millas, solamente* (pp. 56, 174).

³⁰Taped interview with author; March 13, 1975.

³¹*Letras del Ecuador*, 143 (August 1969), 26. Volume number not listed.

³²Taped interview with author; March 13, 1975. It has already been suggested that "Floencia" be considered within the context of women's problems.

³³As explained in note 15, the pagination in the original manuscript of *Los zapatos y los sueños* is not consecutive.

³⁴This information is based on a letter received from Viteri, dated 17 November 1975. Also, in a letter dated 16 February 1976, Viteri wrote that her story "Los zapatos y los sueños," from the same collection, recently received the "Primer Premio: Joaquín Gallegos Lara" in Guayaquil.

³⁵*La semana*, 11, 46 (May 21, 1960), 3, 16.

³⁶Already cited in note 15.

³⁷Ambato: Imprenta de Educación, 1954.

³⁸Quito: Editorial Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1962.

³⁹See also: "La flor del olvido" (pp. 12-21), "Historia de la piedrecita blanca" (pp. 22-26), and "Heliotropo" (pp. 37-43).

⁴⁰María Angélica Idrobo, "Taita Imbabura: Leyenda indígena," *Alas*, 1, 1 (December 1934), 36.

⁴¹"Runa Cristo," *Mundo pequeño* (Cuenca: Editorial Amazonas, 1948), pp. 75-76.

⁴²"La chinita," *Mundo pequeño*, p. 102.

⁴³"Rona broto!!!," *Gleba*, p. 22.

⁴⁴Other stories of interest are: by Mary Corylé, in *Mundo pequeño*, "Mañito" (pp. 61-74); "Eran esclavos" (pp. 87-96); in *Gleba*, "Por las costas" (pp. 25-30); "El Vicente Mejía" (pp. 31-34); "El amo teniente" (pp. 35-43); "Descastado" (pp. 145-152). Violeta Luna, "El retorno," *Los pasos amarillos*, pp. 73-76.

⁴⁵Similarly numerous women have written pieces about historical events and legends that do not deal with the Indian. Pérez de Oleas Zambrano's collection, already cited, includes a variety of themes. See also: Zoila Rendón de Mosquera, "La procesión de Viernes Santo," in *Tradiciones y leyendas del Ecuador*, ed. Inés Barrera and Eulalia Barrera (Quito: Empresa Editora "El Comercio," 1947), pp. 301-305; Eulalia Barrera, "La capilla del consuelo," in *Tradiciones y leyendas del Ecuador*, pp. 310-312.

⁴⁶Already cited in note 15; this collection of stories was originally published in 1964.

⁴⁷*Rol beligerante*, pp. 15-39.

⁴⁸"Un comentario de Benjamín Carrión," *Yunques y crisoles americanos*, p. 235. According to Rumazo, this article was originally entitled, "Lupe Rumazo, ensayista y cuentista," published in *El papel literario* of *El Nacional* (Caracas), October 9, 1966.

⁴⁹Quito: El Colegio Normal Experimental "Juan Montalvo," 1973.

⁵⁰Cited from prologue of *Antología de literatura infantil ecuatoriana (cuento y teatro)*, p. 5.

⁵¹See: Mary Corylé, *Mundo pequeño*, pp. 109-177 (these pages correspond to the collection's third section, entitled "Vidas mínimas"); Teresa Crespo de Salvador, *Pepe Golondrina y otros cuentos*, Cuadernos de narradores cuencanos contemporáneos (Cuenca: Ediciones del Departamento de Extensión Cultural del I. Municipio de Cuenca, 1969); for the other women, see selections in *Antología de literatura infantil ecuatoriana (cuento y teatro)*. It should be added that these stories lack any apparent traces of feminism.

CONCLUSION

An important aspect of the recent literature on women has been its attempt to correct false female stereotypes that have limited the general public's understanding of women's place in society. Susan Soeiro explains that much of the current research on the Latin American female

forms a minute part of a necessary revision aimed at achieving a balanced and multidimensional view of the Ibero-American reality, past and present. Men, as the traditional transmitters of culture in society, have conveyed what they knew, understood, and judged to be important. Since women's activities differed considerably from those of men, they were regarded as insignificant and unworthy of mention. Scholars have further perpetuated the patriarchal and sexist assumptions of their own societies or those they have studied. As a result, more than four and a half centuries of history and all of the important ongoing processes of modernization, urbanization, professionalization, and even propagation seem to have occurred without the participation or even the presence of women.¹

In the light of these distortions, and consistent with other studies, this dissertation has reevaluated certain traditional beliefs about women, focusing on the role Ecuadorian women have played in national letters.

The present study has concentrated on two principal objectives: (1) to refute traditional claims that women have not written prose literature in Ecuador; and (2) to demonstrate that the major themes found in their works offer a penetrating view of women's place in Ecuadorian society. With respect to the first point, after considering the authors and works already analyzed, it becomes apparent that critics

have neglected many women writers who have turned to literature as a means of expressing themselves. Their numbers might be larger were it not for the fact that they have been "victimized," so to speak, by a body of literary criticism that overlooks and/or denies both their ability to write and their presence in national letters. The few writers who have overcome this prejudice and have ultimately been recognized in anthologies and literary histories (i.e., Dolores Veintemilla de Galindo, Marietta de Veintemilla, and Blanca Martínez de Tinajero) have nevertheless been treated as secondary figures whose works are assumed to be of scant importance or undeserving of serious critical attention. Consequently, in our study we have shouldered the burden of reexamining women's place in national letters, with the express purpose of demonstrating that a meritorious literary tradition exists among Ecuadorian women writers.

It must be borne in mind that since "cultivation precedes fruition,"² it is imperative women be made aware of past literary models from which they can learn and develop their artistic talents. In connection with the need for continued experimentation, Alejo Carpentier's theory of narrative development is especially pertinent: "Para hablarse de la novela es menester que haya una novelística. . . . Con sólo haberse escrito el *Werther* y *El hombre que ríe* no podría hablarse hoy de *novela romántica*. . . . [Para] que un país tenga novela, hay que asistir a la labor de varios novelistas, en distinto escalafón de edades, empeñados en una labor paralela, semejante o antagónica, con un esfuerzo continuado y una constante experimentación de la técnica."³ Thus, although there are no great Ecuadorian female

writers to date, it makes no sense to spurn the efforts of potential writers whose production needs to be evaluated and analyzed objectively.

Regarding the prose and its treatment of female images in Ecuadorian society, it becomes obvious that women have not been totally satisfied with their secondary roles in national development and growth. Contrary to Benjamín Carrión's belief that Ecuador is a "pueblo hijo de mujer," women's literary works point out that the female has had to fight continually against male domination--political, cultural, and/or sexual. Thus, despite apparent acceptance of motherhood and the *marianista* ideal, it has been shown that Ecuador's women have championed many feminist issues, revealing their rejection of the inequities and injustices that traditionally have oppressed them.

Naturally, it should be remembered that the writers' comments about women in Ecuador which we have included only reflect the viewpoint of the urban middle-class female intellectual. In other words, up to the present, Ecuadorian women writers have provided readers with a limited interpretation of the female's overall situation in Ecuador; Indian women, the *montuvias* (rural women from the coast), and marginal women from the city are noticeably absent. Similarly lacking are studies on women journalists and poetesses; the image of women in male writers' works; a reevaluation of women's participation in history; sexual attitudes among women; and women in the labor force. In short, because much remains to be done in terms of investigating the attitudes and problems of the Ecuadorian female, it is hoped that this dissertation will underscore the voids in our knowledge and stimulate the continued redressing of traditional prejudices about Ecuadorian women through studies on their numerous and diverse contributions to society.

Notes
Conclusion

¹"Recent Work on Latin American Women: A Review Essay," p. 497.

²Cynthia Ozick, "Women and Creativity: The Demise of the Dancing Dog," *Women in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, p. 447.

³"Problemática de la actual novela latinoamericana," *Tientos y diferencias* (Montevideo: Arca, 1967), pp. 9-10.

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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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